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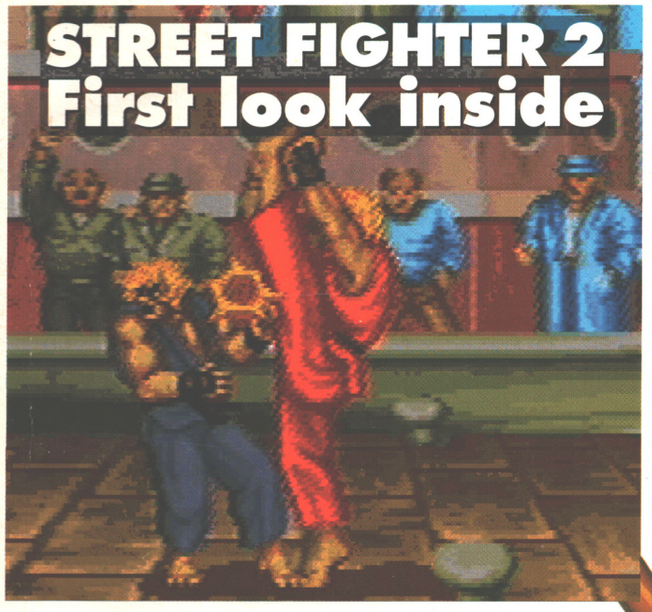
AMIGA POWER

A MAGAZINE WITH *ATTITUDE*

STREET FIGHTER 2
First look inside



OH NO! IT'S...
LEMMINGS 2 exclusively unveiled in this issue!

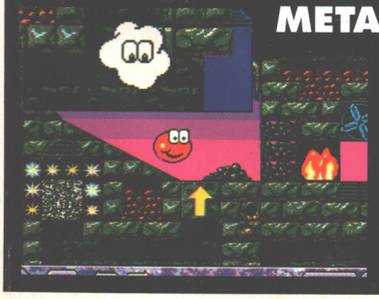
UNBEATABLE
THE BEST PLAYABLE DEMOS

YOURS WITH ISSUE 19 OF AMIGA POWER

DOODLEBUG

Cor! Core do the console platform thing. Just check it out!

METAMORPHOSIS



Get in a state with this mad new arcade adventure. It's a gas! And a liquid, and a solid. Weird indeed.

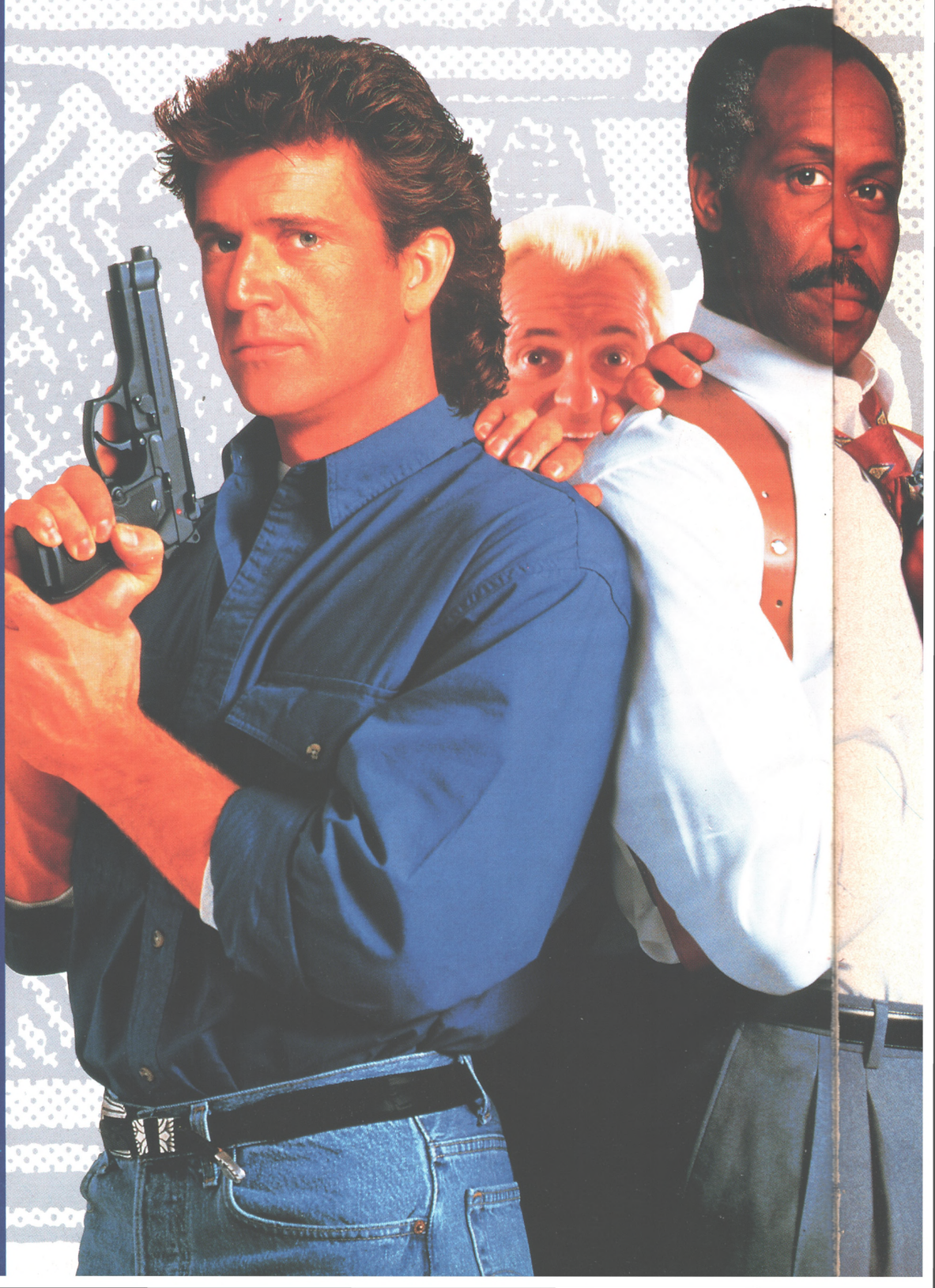
AMIGA POWER

WING COMMANDER and all that: Mindscape speak.

11 PAGES OF TOP TIPS

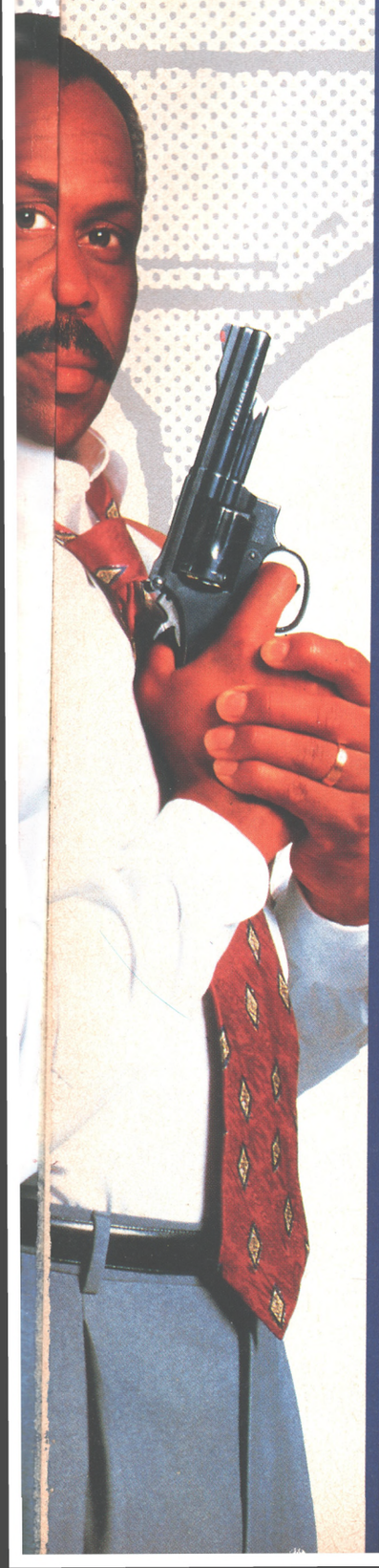
ISSUE 19

LETHAL W



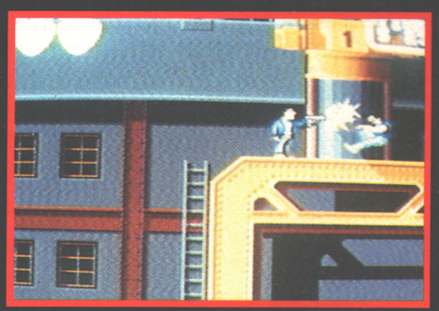
COMMODORE
ATARI ST
AMIGA
IBM PC &
COMPATIBLES

WEAPON



TWO COPS - BOTH LETHAL

A multi-level shoot 'em up based on aspects of all three LETHAL WEAPON movies. You can choose to be either one of the two high fire-power cops... each having his individual strengths - and weaknesses! There are many missions to complete including the rescue of a kidnapped girl, the pursuit and arrest of drugs runners, finding and arresting a police murderer, plus many more. You choose the level to suit your objectives within the game-play.



IT'S MEAN, FAST AND... LETHAL!

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AMIGA POWER

ISSUE 19 NOVEMBER 1992

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SPECIAL THANKS TO:
Clint (for coming back), Geena (for being so damn tall), andJohn Motson (for not being Jimmy Hill)

TV COMEDY AWARDS TO:
Paul Merton, Julian Clary, The Mary Whitehouse Experience and everyone on Brain Drain.

COMPETITION:
If the AMIGA POWER team were famous movie stars, who would they be? The most amusing answer gets, er, something or other.

AMIGA POWER comes to you from Future Publishing, home of Amiga Format, ST Format, Amiga Shopper, Your Sinclair, Commodore Format, Amstrad Action, Sega Power, Total, and more market leaders by the million...

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10 TRUE STORIES
More hot news than you can shake a stick at. (What *does* that mean?) Get full details of the Amiga Christmas bundles, find out how to join the James Pond Fin Club (no really), check out some seriously weird joysticks and get the latest gossip on everything that's happening out there.

16 THE GALLUP CHARTS
Find out what's hot today and what's going to be sizzling tomorrow etc. Or is that Cinemattractions? Well, anyway...

63 COMPLETE CONTROL
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It's a simple deal: You write us amusing, thought provoking, argumentative letters and we print them. At least that's the way we'd like it to be.

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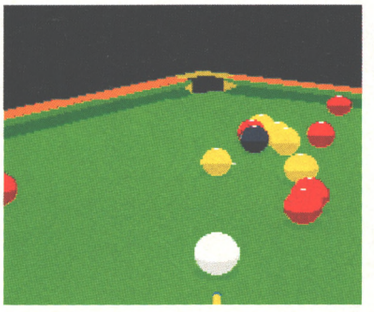

POOL
More evidence of Archer Maclean's misspent youth with this tweaked sequel. Page 32

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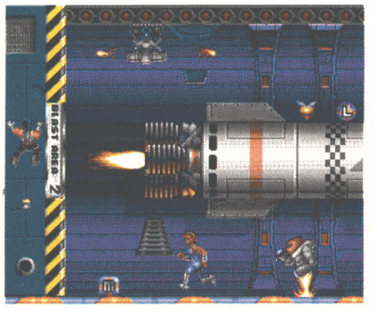

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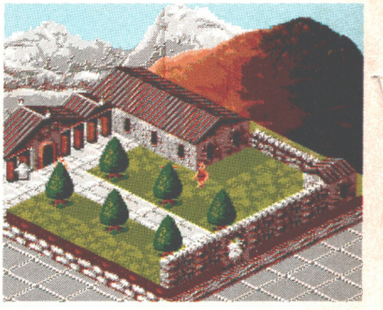

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Let your megalomania run free – be Emperor of Rome. Page 46

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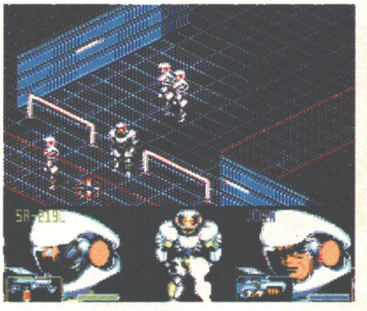

SHADOWORLDS
Sci-fi adventuring in a world of shadows. *(Out! – Ed)* Page 50

LEMMINGS 2!
They're small, they're furry, and they're back! At last, find out what DMA's blockbuster is like in this exclusive preview. It's all in our Things To Come section, which begins on page 20.

SABRE TEAM
Who dares wins. SAS hard men do their stuff. Page 54

OVER 300
GAMES RATED IN EVERY ISSUE!

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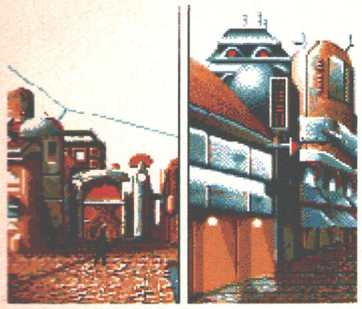

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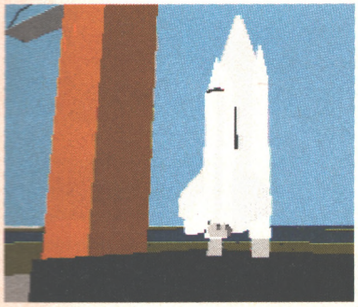

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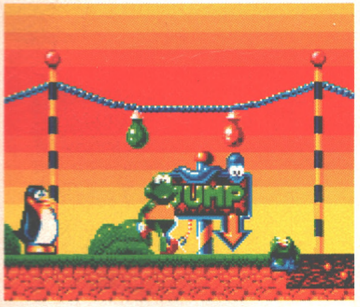

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Something to give the Monkeys a run for their money? Page 56

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NOVEMBER

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NEXT MONTH...

...starts on 19th November *(That can't be right. – Ed)* We'll bring you reviews of *Road Rash, Pinball Fantasies, Humans* and more besides. Make a note in your diary or you'll miss out.

disk 19

We're sticking with our promise to bring you only top quality playable demos on our coverdisk. You still won't find slideshows, old PD games or non-playable demos. This month we've got complete levels of a couple of games that'll charm your socks off.

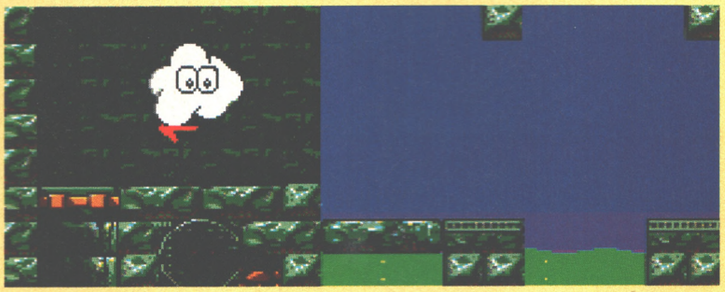
AND THIS IS DISK 19

DOODLEBUG

Read the review in this very issue and then check out one level of this platform cutey for yourself. Take Doodlebug to safety through a colourful world with only a crayon to protect you. It's fab.

METAMORPHOSIS

An entertaining game if ever there was one. If, like us, you don't understand all that chemistry stuff, then this is the game for you. Now you can learn all about the four (four?) states of matter – solid, liquid, gas and, er... bouncy. You take control of a lump of, well, 'matter' really, and make your way through a world fraught with danger by choosing carefully which state you'd like to be in. It's a gas (and a liquid and a solid and a bouncy thing) – you'll love it.



GOT A FAULTY DISK?

● Oh no! Are you sure? Before you go any further try the procedures desribed in the panel over the page. If, after all that, you *do* have disk problems, simply place it in an envelope, along with an SAE and an explanatory letter, and return it NOT TO THE AMIGA POWER OFFICE but to: AMIGA POWER Disk Returns 19, Tib plc, 36-50 Adelaide Street, Bradford BD5 0EA.

disk 19

THOSE DARN DISKS

HEY! YOU! THIS IS WHERE WE EXPLAIN HOW TO LOAD THE DISKS, SO PLEASE DO READ VERY, VERY CAREFULLY

- *Metamorphosis* is one meg only.
- To load either *Metamorphosis* or *Doodlebug*, switch off your machine, insert the disk, and switch your machine back on.
- An options menu will load.. Simply press F1 or F2 depending on which game you wish to load.
- If you own an old A500 machine, then you will then have to type either MORPH (Return) or DOODLE_BUG (Return) to continue loading. The '_' character can be typed by holding down SHIFT and pressing the '-' (minus) key on the top row of your keyboard. Sorry for the inconvenience.
- Please keep the disk you are playing your game from in the drive at all times, and remember – switching the machine off for 20 seconds or so before loading up a new program will help prevent disks being infested by stray viruses.

AND IF (HEAVEN FORBID) THERE SHOULD BE ANY BIZARRE COMPLICATIONS?

- First, try the process again, once again making sure you've removed extra peripherals the program may not 'like'.
- If it's only one of the programs on your disk that doesn't work, not the whole thing, try phoning our COVERDISK HELPLINE. Call 0274 736990 and ask for Sam Hiah.
- If your disk fails to load, then pop it in a padded envelope, along with a letter explaining the problem, to: AMIGA POWER Disk 19 Returns, Tib Plc, 36-50 Adelaide Street, Bradford, BD5 OEA.
Give the nice people at Tib a couple of weeks, and you ought to receive a shiny, working new disk.

Whatever you do, please don't bother sending any disks to the AMIGA POWER offices. We're about as technical as three fruits marmalade on warm soggy toast, so it's unlikely that we'll be able to help at all. We really do throw any disks returned to us straight in the bin. It's not that we don't care – we just don't understand.

DOODL

Publisher: Core Design
Author: Adrian Cummings

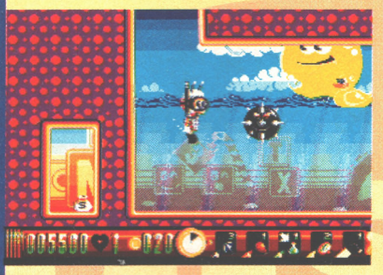
It's got doodles in it! It's got a bug in it! It's got doodles and bugs in it. It's *Doodlebug*! Are you getting fed up of this intro yet?

Stuart reviews this corking little platform game over on page 36, so why don't you go on over there and give it a bit of a read, then come back here and we'll discuss what you've learned, okay?

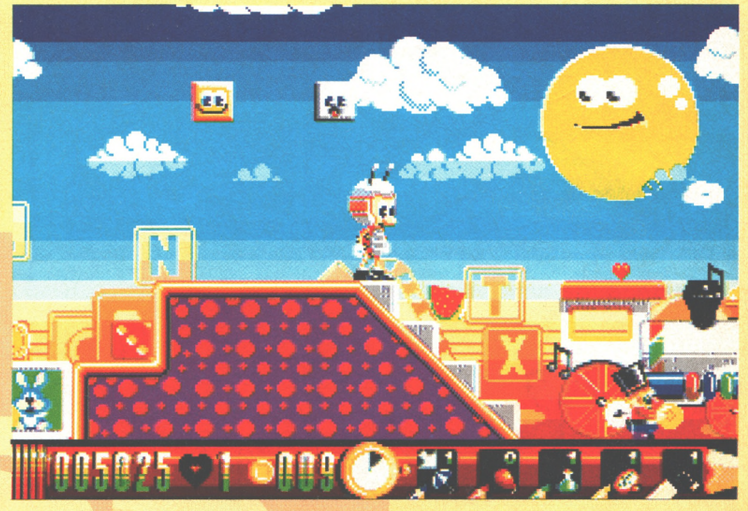
SOME TIME LATER

Ah, you're back. Well, you should pretty much know everything now, so that'll save us some time. This luscious little demo contains the first world of *Doodlebug*, that's three sub-levels AND the end-of-level boss. Don't say we're not good to you. Having read the review you'll know that your objective is simply to get to the end of each section, indicated on these levels by a cute little Wendy house. On your way you'll have to sort out loads of bad guys, a task which you can perform by leaping into the air, pressing fire to send Doodlebug into a fast and lethal spin, and then crashing into them. Easy, eh? Bye.

WHAT ABOUT THE SECRET ROOMS?



"Mine!" "Well, yes, it's yours if you want it." "No, fool, it's a MINE."



Trains, drum majors and Doodlebugs. Sounds like a good title for one of those John Hughes movie, if you ask us. Not that you did. *(Oh shut up! – Ed)*

METAMOR

Publisher: Flair
Author: Peter Johnson

THE COMPLICATED BIT

Metamorphosis is a bit funny about working on A600s with built-in hard drives, but it can be done, so don't panic. The first thing you're going to have to do is switch the machine on as normal, but hold down both mouse buttons while it's booting up. A menu screen should appear after a couple of seconds, at the bottom of which will be a little bar marked 'Advanced Options'. Click on this box and another menu screen will appear, containing lots of techie-sounding words in little boxes. Don't worry about these, you don't have to know anything about what they mean. All you need to know is that all the boxes down the left hand side which have the word 'ENABLED' in them have to be clicked on so that they read 'DISABLED', except for the very top one (which should have 'DF0' displayed very close to it), which should be left at 'ENABLED'. Once you've made all the other ones read 'DISABLED', bung your coverdisk into the internal drive and click on the box at the bottom of the screen marked 'USE'. Now click on the 'DF0' box on the menu screen which appears next,

Like a rubber ball, he'll come bouncing back to you. But he'll need to metamorphose soon or he'll not be able to get any further.

Drip. But it won't be watery for long, as soon as it gets to the fire it'll be steam.

LEBUG

disk 19

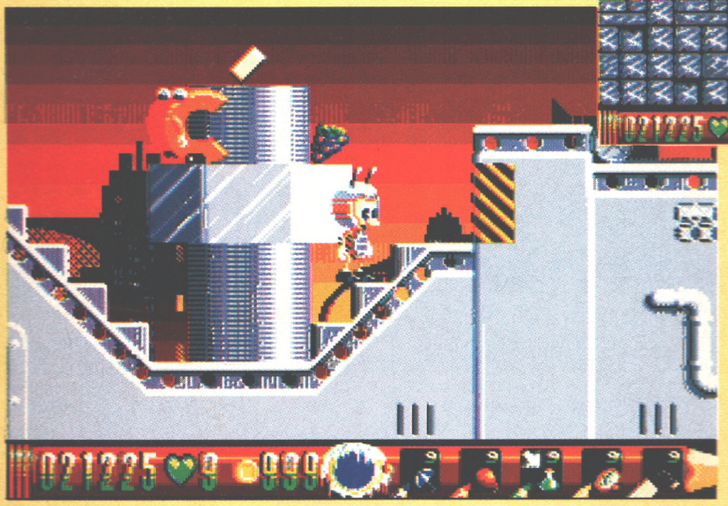
Oh yeah, there are some secret rooms.

BUT HOW DO YOU GET INTO THEM?

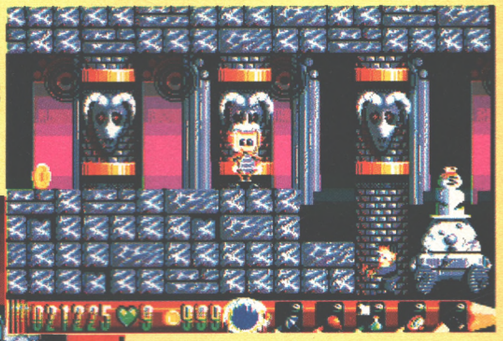
If you come across any floor blocks which look as if they might be hiding something interesting, jump on them. They just might crumble away and lead you somewhere interesting...

WHAT ARE THE SWITCHES FOR?

Pull them and find out.



Down at the bottom of that there screen, you'll see an icon bar. And in that icon bar there are some icons showing what pencil power-ups are available.



It's a bizarre juxtaposition of cute bugs, demonic pillars and hunchbacks.

Why Doodlebug? Because he's a bug that doodles. It took us ages to figure that out.

AND THOSE FUNNY LITTLE BLOCKS WITH THE FACES IN THEM?

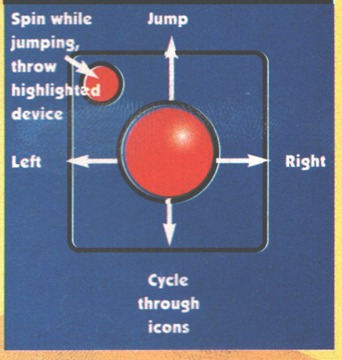
Headbutt them and a prize of some sort will come out. You can also stand on the blocks, but only before you've headbutted them or who knows what might happen.

WHAT DO ALL THE ICONS DO?

Look, did you read the review or what?

That should be just about enough information to get you going. Except for the controls, of course...

CONTROLS



RPHOSIS

...much, in fact, like this. It wanders lonely as a cloud that floats on high o'er vales and hills. But mind the fans.

Mr Dense-y goes to dense town. The icons at the bottom show how many changes you've got to play with.

then press F2 as normal. Theoretically, *Metamorphosis* should now load.

AFTER ALL THAT...

Phew. Now all you have to worry about is the game. It's a simple enough one in theory, all you have to do is get your, er, creature to the exit on each mazey-platformy level. Of course, it's not as easy as it sounds, because there are lots of obstacles in each stage which your, er, creature simply can't get past. Stuck? Not a bit of it, guv – all the resourceful little, er, creature does is change into another, completely different, er, creature. Each different type of, er, creature available to you can safely pass one of the game's obstacles, so it's up to you judiciously to decide when to change form in order to get yourself safely through to the end. And that's it. (Oh,no! Scottish writer in monstrously bad pacing disaster! How do we fill the rest of the page and still appear useful and relevant? Ah, yes...)

DETAILS OF THOSE, ER, CREATURES AS IT WERE IN, ER, FULL

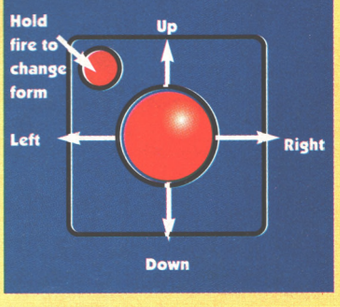
PUFFY
A cloud. Float loftily above all sorts of danger, but don't get sucked in by the apparent easiness of it all...

DRIPPY
A big blob of water. Good for dribbling through grates, but don't get it too near a fire, will you?

SOFTY
He's meaty, he's beaty, he's big and he's bouncy. He's a soft and squishy rubber ball, with all the properties that entails.

DENSE-Y
This lead ball isn't too smart, but he's dead hard. Ideal, in fact, for just smashing through solid walls and stuff.

CONTROLS



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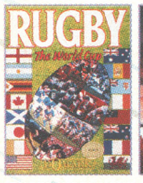

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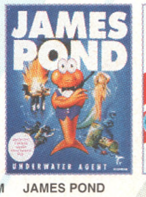

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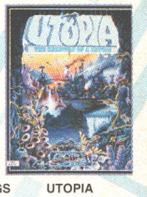

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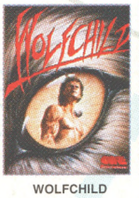

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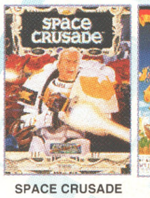

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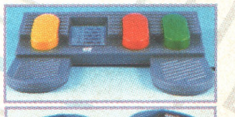

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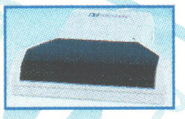

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Anyone who has experienced problems with this mail order company, please send details of your complaint and proof of order to Saturn Software Complaint, c/o Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon. BA1 2BW. Please try to send them by early November.

NEW AMIGA BUNDLES – WILD OR JUST PLAIN WEIRD?

Well, bundle my Amiga! Santa's going to have his work cut out lugging these enormous boxes of Amiga goodies around this Christmas.

Once again, it's all happening in Amigaland, with some interesting developments at Commodore.

● Yes folks, Commodore has unleashed two Amiga 600 bundles just in time for your Christmas lists to Santa. The first pack of goodies is entitled The Wild, The Weird and The Wicked. It will be available in the shops on the 1st of October at £349.99, a significant drop from the last years' £399 price. It includes an Amiga 600, *Deluxe Paint III* from Electronic Arts, and three games – *Grand Prix* from Microprose is seen by Commodore as the 'wicked ' part of the package, *Putty* from *System 3* is the 'weird' element and Ocean's *Pushover* is the 'wild' bit.

Although Commodore say they have gone for quality games, there is definitely an absence of star names – *The Simpsons*, *Lemmings*, and *Batman* all featured in past Amiga packs.

If you've got a bit more lolly to splash out with, then you might consider the Amiga 600 HD pack. Priced at £499.99, it will also be available on the 1st of October. It includes Ocean's *Epic*, System 3's *Myth*, Millennium's *Rome* and the Amiga language lab, containing *Trivial Pursuit* in three different languages, English, German and French (you can actually play them in three different languages at the same time), a multi lingual dictionary to help you out and Amiga text, a basic word processing system.

Commodore's UK Managing Director, Kelly Sumner, told us, "If you look at the two packs you can see they're designed for two entirely different types of person – Wild, Weird and Wicked is aimed at the younger purchaser while the *Epic* pack is aimed at the more serious kind of guy." This is underlined by the type of software in each pack – the *Epic* pack for example has more strategy, with an education angle on it too.

Both packs were put together in January, at a time when *Epic* was supposed to be one of the best things since sliced bread. Indeed Kelly Sumner commented that they "Were worried that *Epic* had had a few false starts on the way to actually getting there". It certainly appears that Commodore at least are now happy *Epic* has got its act together.

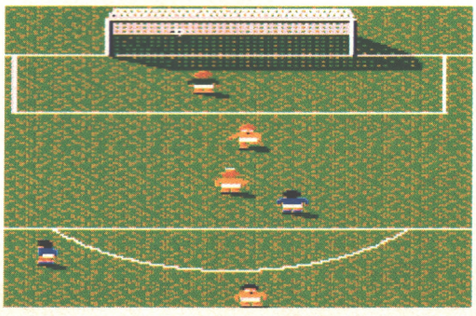
● Following the A600 price drops in early August there've been some interesting results for Commodore. Sumner told us how they'd "envisaged about a two-and-a-half fold increase in sales, but what actually happened in the first week was a four fold increase in sales". In effect, sales have gone up about four and a half times since the price drop.

● Further news from the Commodore head honchos is the Scottish connection. They now intend to produce all Amigas in Scotland. SCI, an associate company of Commodore UK, who've produced Amigas in the far east will undertake the Scottish job.

● AMIGA POWER's roving world news team can announce that the A4000 has been officially launched by Commodore at the USA World Of Commodore Show in Pasadena. The high-powered multi-media work station has impressed crowds with some incredible displays. It's the first Amiga to make use of Commodore's 'Advanced Graphics Architecture' chip set. This is perhaps, the most exciting aspect of the machine providing the user with a palette of 16.7 million colours. 256,000 of these can be displayed on the screen at any one time. The A4000 has been firmly place at the top of the Amiga hierarchy – its central processor is the Motorola 32-bit 68040, clocked at 25MHz. In terms of memory you'll find that the standard configuration is 2Mb of chip or graphics RAM and 4Mb of Fast RAM. At the moment there is no official word from Commodore about plans for the A4000's UK launch. But stay tuned to AMIGA POWER for the news as it unfolds.

BETTER THAN SENSIBLE SOCCER!

Did we tell you how good *Sensible Soccer* was yet? Oh, we did. Well, forget it anyway, because it's not that good any more. Nope, it's even better. *Sensible Soccer 1.1* is a new upgraded version of the game which scored an astonishing 93% in AP15, and it features fully up-to-date team data from the current season, including all of the 412 new nations created by the disintegration of the former Eastern Bloc. Not only that, but the gameplay's been tweaked too, with the goalkeepers, for example, now able to catch the ball in a dive, or parry shots round the posts for corners. The best news of all, though, is that owners of the old, merely brilliant *Sensible Soccer* can get hold of this positively stupendous new version by sending just £3.95 (and their original data disk) to Renegade, who will then return the original disk along with the new one, so that you've got a choice of two *Sensible Soccers* to play with. If, for some stupid, perverted reason, you don't actually have a copy of this fabulous game yet, you'll be able to buy the new updated version on its own in specially-marked packs from good software stockists all over the country, from early October (ie now). What are you waiting for?



One of the best games in the world just got better. *SS1.1* should be in the shops right about now. If you've already got *Sensible Soccer* then why not upgrade?

JOIN JAMES POND'S FANTASTIC FIN CLUB

Remember the days when comic characters had their own clubs, with special gifts and stuff? Well, Millennium obviously do, having just launched the FI5H Secret Service, a club for fans of that legendary piscine hero James Pond. Membership to the club costs £8.95, which will get you a special Secret Agent's pack containing an identity card, James Pond stickers, secret codes, secret mission and even – yes! – a James Pond boardgame. Membership will last until 31st December 1993, with training tips, new mission briefings, competitions, and prizes available from time to time.

So, if you think you cod cut it as a member of FI5H, then make your cheque for £8.95 payable to FI5H Secret Service, and send it to FI5H HQ, Unit 3, Edison Road, St Ives, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE17 4LF. Alternatively...

WIN! FREE MEMBERSHIP TO JAMES POND'S SECRET SERVICE!

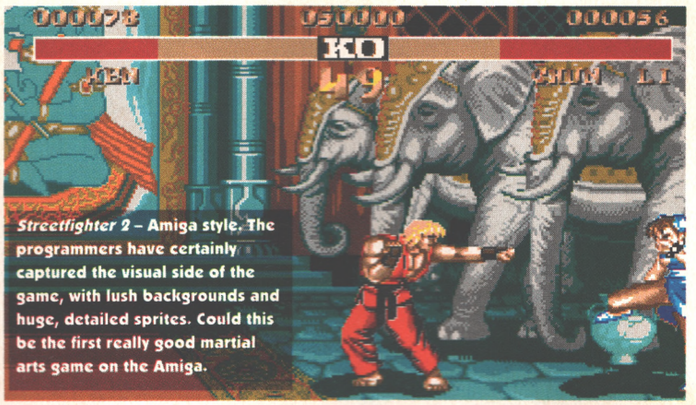
Those wonderfully generous (if slightly deranged) people at Millennium have stumped up for 10 free memberships to the James Pond Club, AND 50 *Aquatics Games* posters for you lucky AMIGA POWER readers. Generosity? Pah, they've got tons of the stuff.

The catch? Ah, yes. There's always a catch. This time we want you to come up with sentence of no more than 20 words, including as many crap fish gags as possible, explaining why you want to win.

Easy, huh? Simply scribble your answer down on the back of a sealed envelope or a postcard, and send your entry (before 30th November) to Smoke Me A Kipper, AMIGA POWER, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon. BA1 2BW.

Good luck, and remember: may the fish be with you.

Produce plenty of piscine puns and you could be a member of this fintastic fan club.



Streetfighter 2 – Amiga style. The programmers have certainly captured the visual side of the game, with lush backgrounds and huge, detailed sprites. Could this be the first really good martial arts game on the Amiga.

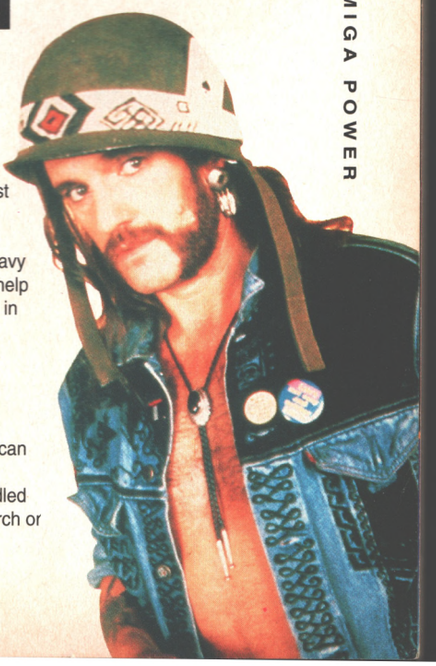
STREETFIGHTER 2 – CHRISTMAS NUMBER ONE OR WHAT?

Here it is – *Streetfighter 2* on the Amiga! As you can see US Gold are going all out to make this look exactly like the arcade original. Whether or not it will play like it, we don't know. Some noises are being made which suggest that US Gold are developing a special joystick, to enable the player to perform all the complex martial arts as featured of the arcade game. Watch out for more *Streetfighter 2* news next month and, just maybe, more screenshots.

Above: Some of the fearsome characters yet to be added. Main pic: *Streetfighter 2* is the ultimate martial arts game in the arcades. Will it really play as good as it looks?

MOTORHEAD IN VIRGIN SHOCK

With a headline like that you're probably expecting a story about how Lemmy and the boys have been caught in some back stage antics, but sadly no. Virgin (the company) have scooped what must be the most unlikely license of the year, if not the decade. November sees the release of *Motorhead*, the video game based on the exploits of one of Heavy Metal's real character bands. In it you have to help top warty rock god Lemmy get a band together in time for some big gigs as his boys have been kidnapped, probably by some music lovers. Travelling through sections such as Karaoke land, Nashville Land, Gothic Land and Hippy Land with bonus sections like Grab A Groupie, Hippy Bashing and Trash the Hotel Room you can probably guess the tone of the proceedings. A limited number of the early release will be bundled with a copy of Motorhead's latest 'epic' CD March or Die. Watch out for a full review next issue.

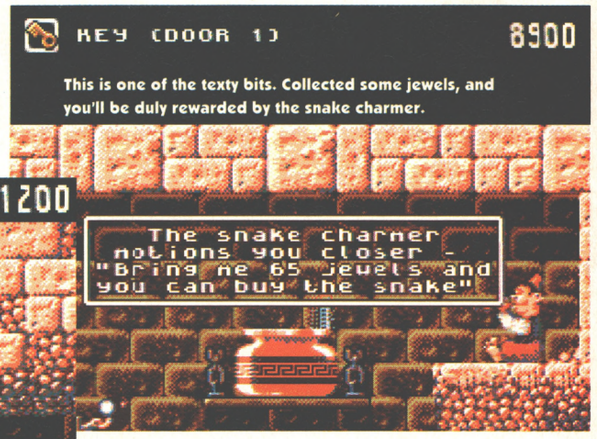


GREMLIN ON A CRUSADE

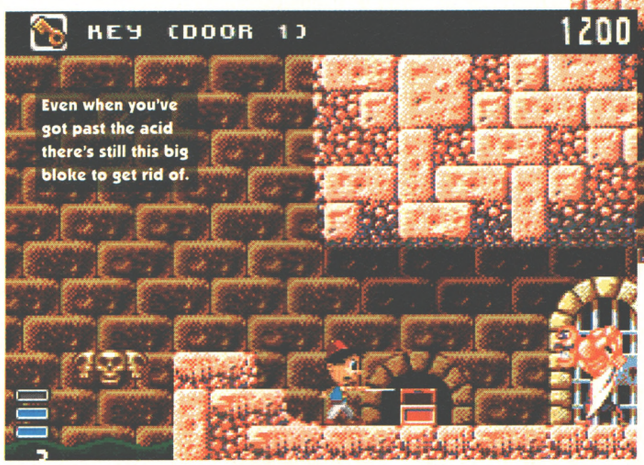
Gremlin have announced their release schedule up to Christmas. In October they're planning to release the expansion disks to the popular *Space Crusade*. The exact date and price haven't been finalised yet but you can expect more missions packed with alien scum just waiting to be blasted. In much the same vein, *Hero Quest 2* is also on the way, which is about all we know at the moment, but more news soon. November sees the long-awaited *Nigel Mansell* game. In the recent spate of racing games this faces some serious competition from the likes of *Vroom* and *F1GP* but Gremlin are confident that our Nige can take on and beat all comers. The world champion will come in at £29.99 (hey, that's nearly as much as Williams paid him this year) and when you think of Gremlin's racing pedigree, it should be worth looking at.

JUST KIDDING

We just thought you might like to see how Krisalis' potentially massive *Soccer Kid* is coming on, plus we've got some early shots of *Arabian Nights* into the bargain. Actually scheduled for release before *Soccer Kid*, which has now been delayed until next Spring, *Arabian Nights*



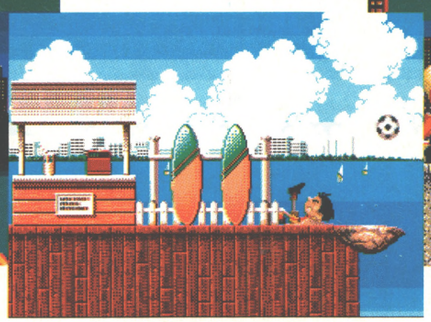
This is one of the texty bits. Collected some jewels, and you'll be duly rewarded by the snake charmer.



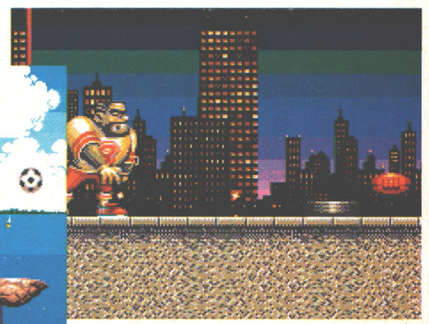
Even when you've got past the acid there's still this big bloke to get rid of.

uses the same ultra-fast scrolling platform game engine as *Soccer Kid*. Unlike *Soccer Kid* though, *Arabian Nights* has something of a strategy bent, with puzzles to solve and the occasional bits of text. Needless to say, both games look very consoley – and might well be the fastest, smoothest platform games yet seen on the Amiga. Watch out for review of *Arabian Nights* in the next month or two, and more news on *Soccer Kid* in the new year.

Football becomes a martial art. Head the ball at the roller skater to get rid of him.



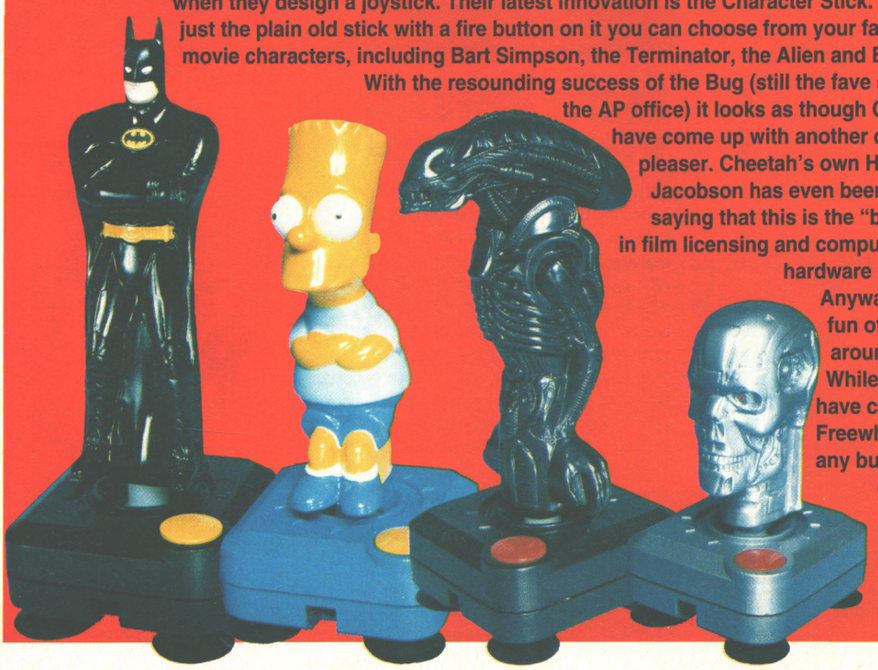
With practice you'll soon be doing great overhead kicks and stuff.



The end of level boss is an American football player who throws balls at you.

JOYSTICKS OR TOY STICKS

You can always trust those chaps at Cheetah to come up with something completely new and different when they design a joystick. Their latest innovation is the Character Stick. Instead of just the plain old stick with a fire button on it you can choose from your favourite movie characters, including Bart Simpson, the Terminator, the Alien and Batman. With the resounding success of the Bug (still the fave stick in the AP office) it looks as though Cheetah have come up with another crowd pleaser. Cheetah's own Howard Jacobson has even been heard saying that this is the "biggest tie-up in film licensing and computer game hardware history". Er, yeah.



Anyway, you can join in the fun of wrenching the Alien's head around in a tough game of *Crazy Cars III* for £12.99. While we're on the subject of freaky joysticks, Spectravideo have come up with the strangest of the lot. Nigel Mansell's Freewheel is a steering wheel controller that isn't attached to any bulky plastic stand. You just hold it and turn it to get your car to move. Obviously it's only really useful on driving and flying games but after trying it out at the recent ECTS we can safely say that it's, er, different. It's going to be priced at £29.99 and when we get one in for a review we'll let you know exactly what we think of it.

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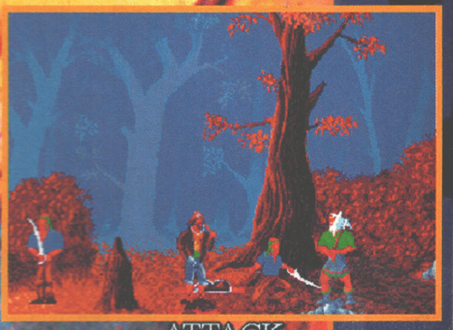

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SILMARILS' BEWILDERING BOB TAILS

There's this rabbit, you see. And he breaks bricks with a baseball bat.

Silmarils' forthcoming *Bunny Bricks* is a cartoon-style, arcade game featuring a bob tailed star called Bunny. With the aid of a baseball bat, the floppy eared hero must pass through a series of animated features and destroy every brick he sees.

He's hindered by other characters – Sharky, Naf Naf, Cocky the Villain and the Angel Einstein. Secret bonuses, puzzles and riddles are set to bewilder this rampaging 'Rambo' rabbit, but multi-bats, a machine gun, and superbat are just some of the options available to help him in his task.

We expect *Bunny Bricks* to be a cocktail of cartoon style arcade action in the style of Tex Avery. Indeed Richard Hennerley from Daze Marketing, Silmarils' distributor, thinks that *Bunny Bricks* will make you happier than a bunny in a carrot patch! Er, quite.

Bunny Bricks will be available on Amiga at the beginning of November.

Meanwhile... from the creators of *Storm Master* and *Ishar* comes *Transarctica*, a fantasy strategy, simulation set in the aftermath of a terrible nuclear winter.

On the 24th December 2022, 'Operation Blind', an experiment to save the world from the Greenhouse Effect drought, took place. It 'backfired' and the world was thrown into a horrific nuclear winter. Civilisation perishes under huge ice mountains.

The game is set centuries later when life is mean and tough for the survivors. In this snow world the only means of transport are huge trains. A huge corporation, the 'Viking Union' control both the trains and their source, coal, the world's only currency.

A superbly demonic train from one of the static screens in *Transarctica*.

You play an idealist, the captain of a great train, the 'Transarctica' who inspired by ancient writings believes he can 'bring the sun back to life'. Unfortunately, however, not everyone wants to see the ice retreat – the Viking Union will do anything to protect their monopoly. From what we've seen so far the graphics are beautiful. If its game structure is anything like *Stormmaster* and *Ishar* then this could be Silmarils' best to date.

MICROIDS' FRENCH FRENZY

French coders Microids have two new releases to tickle your fancy. The first is *Super Sport Challenge* which is loosely connected with the you-know-what games. In *SSC* there are 12 events ranging from sprinting, throwing, jumping, and swimming events. Each event has numerous viewing angles which are used for extra realism and playability (it says here). *Super Sport Challenge* should be out as you read this.

To follow *SSC* comes a completely different type of game. *Dominium* is a strategy war game, which, for once, doesn't look half bad – loads of attention has been paid to producing some excellent graphics and easy playability.

You control a planetary system which is under attack from a local warlord and you have to save the world – normal kind of thing really. The price has yet to be decided, but a review should be appearing soon.

TITUS GO CHEAP

CCII– just one of the re-release from Titus.

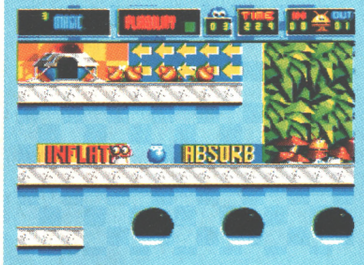
French publisher Titus have announced their intention launch their very own budget label. The new label will be called Fox Hits and is set to hit the shelves at the end of September at a competitive price point of £9.99. The first batch of games will be *Crazy Cars II*, *Fire and Forget I* and *II*, *Wild Streets*, *Arachnophobia*, *Off Shore Warrior*, *Dick Tracy*, *Duck Tales*, *Galactic Conqueror*, *Prehistorik*, *Knight Force* and *Dark Century*, and, as if that wasn't enough, more are promised after November. Titus are also looking at the possibility of placing new products directly onto the budget range but primarily they will be using Fox Hits to air their own back catalogue.

DMI GO CHEAPER

Another software house launching a budget label? Times must be hard. DMI are launching Global Software sometime before Christmas at the ultra low price point of £7.99, with titles like *Adrenalyn*, *Final Countdown*, *Gem'X*, *Ooops Up*, *The Power*, *PP Hammer* and *White Sharks*. These comprise a lot of DMI's back catalogue but they assure us they're planning to release new titles on the budget label as well to increase its appeal. After Christmas they will be releasing up to two titles every month, and all titles will now be fully compatible with the A500P and the A600.

AMIGA POWER RECOMMENDS

Okay, so last month was a bit, er, quiet. Blame the 'waiting for Christmas' syndrome, but don't miss these corkers that DID show up...

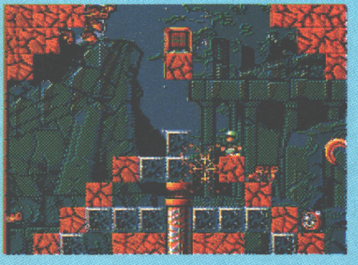


PUTTY
(SYSTEM 3)

There've been a few false starts on this one, but if ever a game showed the benefits of a proper amount of development time being spent on it, it's this one. The best original arcade-type game since *Wizkid*, and featuring probably the Amiga's best-ever soundtrack (as in sound, not music), *Putty* is an absolutely beautiful game that's clearly been a real labour of love for its programmers. Metamorphosing blue blobs, belligerent Scouse sausages, fluffy bunny rabbits and the amazing Uncle Ted are just a few of the new chums you'll meet in this fabulous platform classic, and they'll be your friends for life.

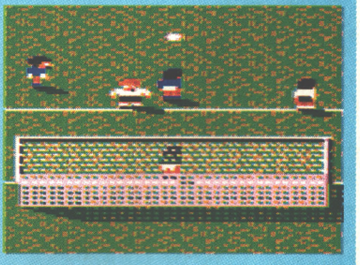
ZOOL
(GREMLIN)

You've waited long enough for it, but now it's finally finished you'd better beware – you're going to be playing it for as long as you were waiting. *Zool*'s had a lot of hype to live up to, but for once everything that was promised has been delivered. It's big, it's action-packed from the word go, it looks lovely, it's stuffed with puzzles to solve and great secret stuff to find, it's got selectable difficulty levels, selectable speed levels, selectable inertia levels, and probably selectable spirit levels as well, it's everything you could ever want from an arcade platform game and a bit more besides. *Sonic The Hedgehog*, Shmonic The Hedgehog, we say.



TRODDLERS
(MIRAGE)

Take all the best bits out of Amiga legend *Lemmings* and not-really-very-legendary-at-all-but-still-really-really-good arcade platform puzzler, *Solomon's Key*, and stick them together into one new game and what you might expect would be a bucket load of lawsuits of almost American proportions. Instead of that, though, Storm have come up with a stunning game with a character all of its own, boasting dozens of brain-blending levels and enough different play options to keep you and a chum entertained for about a hundred years. Well, quite a while, anyway. It's a bit spiffing, it really is.



SENSIBLE SOCCER
(RENEGADE)

'Oh no, not again!', we hear you all cry, but wait! This isn't just boring old ordinary *Sensible Soccer* we're trying to flog you now. No, this time it's *Sensible Soccer 1.1*! Yes, our joint highest-rated game ever just got even better with the addition of up-to-date team and country data and, more importantly, some significantly-improved goalkeepers (the only thing in the original game which anybody found any real fault with). Available approximately now in the shops, or for just four quid if you've already got the original (and you still get to keep your old version as well), but one way or another you really ought to have this by now.

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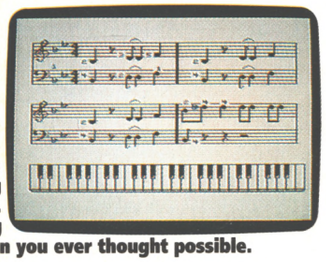

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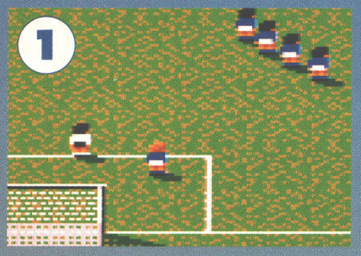
AMIGA POWER PENGUIN GALLUP CHARTS TOP 100

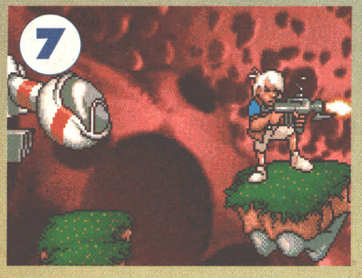
★★★★★ Exceptional ★★★★★ Nearly there ★★★★ Very good ★★★ Has its moments ★★ Flawed ★ Dire

SENSIBLE SOCCER



Nothing has managed to top it yet. For a record smashing fourth month *Sensible Soccer* tops the charts. With the release of version 1.1 coming up it looks as though it's here for keeps. Renegade are over the moon about the success of their game. This is one record that will prove very hard to beat, and with Christmas looming some big names will be pulling out all the stops to do it. Time will tell.

PREMIERE



Core's *Premiere*, er, premiers in the charts this month at number seven. Richard Barclay, Core's spokesperson commented "This goes to show our policy of aiming products at gaps in the market is proving successful. *Corporation*, *Heimdall* and now *Premiere* are the latest in a long line of such products."

1 (1) **SENSIBLE SOCCER** Renegade/Mindscape £25.99 ★★★★★

2 (3) **CIVILISATION** Microprose £34.99 ★★★★

3 (14) **SEUCK** GBH £7.99 ★★★★

4 (13) **F16 COMBAT PILOT** Action 16 £9.99 ★★★

5 (5) **MONKEY ISLAND 2** US Gold £37.99 ★★★★★

6 (4) **JAMES POND** GBH £7.99 ★★★

7 (NE) **PREMIERE** Core Design £30.99 ★★★★★

8 (8) **FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX** Microprose £34.99 ★★★★★

9 (16) **PANZA KICK BOXING** Kixx £9.99 ★★

10 (34) **FALCON** Action 16 £14.99 ★★★

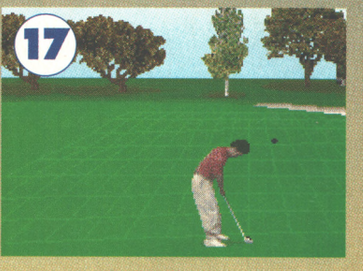
11 (10) **LOTUS CHALLENGE** GBH £9.99 *****
12 (7) **MAGIC LAND DIZZY** Codies £7.99 ***
13 (12) **FIRST DIV MANAGER** Codies £7.99 *
14 (6) **FIRE AND ICE** Renegade £25.99 ****
15 (NE) **CAPTAIN DYNAMO** Codies £7.99**
16 (2) **ESPANIA THE GAMES 92** Ocean £29.99*
17 (NE) **JACK NICKLAUS GOLF** Hit Squad £7.99**
18 (11) **PRO TENNIS TOUR** Hit Squad £25.99 ***
19 (25) **CRAZY CARS 3** Titus £25.99 *****
20 (30) **CHAMP MANAGER** Domark £24.99 ***
21 (18) **GRAHAM TAYLOR SOCCER CHALLENGE** Krisalis £25.99 ****
22 (9) **LURE OF THE TEMPTRESS** Virgin £30.99 *****
23 (15) **RAINBOW ISLANDS** Hit Squad £7.99 *****
24 (21) **STRIKER** Rage Software £25.99 ***
25 (100) **OLYMPIAD COLLECTION** Microvalue £7.99 **
26 (RE) **SUPER CARS 2** GBH £9.99 ****
27 (37) **EOTB2** US Gold £35.99 ****
28 (NE) **PERFECT GENERAL** Ubisoft £34.99 ****
29 (31) **THE MANAGER** US Gold £30.99 *
30 (NE) **ASHES OF EMPIRE** Mirage £39.99 ****
31 (27) **WORLD CRICKET** Zeppelin £7.99 ***
32 (32) **JOHN MADDEN AMERICAN FOOTBALL** Electronic Arts £29.99 *****
33 (NE) **INT CHAMP ATHLETICS** Energize £7.99 **
34 (19) **PROJECT X** Team 17 £25.99 ***
35 (98) **TOTAL RECALL** Hit Squad £7.99 *
36 (NE) **HEAD TO HEAD** Domark £34.99 ****
37 (24) **JAGUAR XJ220** Core Design £25.99 ***
38 (23) **NEW ZEALAND STORY** Hit Squad £7.99 *****
39 (26) **JIMMY WHITE'S SNOOKER** Virgin £29.99 *****
40 (42) **EASY AMOS** Europress Software £34.99 ***
41 (NE) **MATCH OF THE DAY** ZepplinPremier£25.99 *
42 (45) **FANTASY WORLD DIZZY** Codies £6.99 ***
43 (17) **EPIC** Ocean £29.99 *
44 (52) **MAN UNITED** GBH £7.99 *
45 (NE) **VIKINGS** Krisalis £25.99 **
46 (58) **WWF WRESTLEMANIA** Oceans £25.99 *
47 (22) **STEG THE SLUG** Codies £7.99 ***
48 (20) **PANG** Hit Squad £7.99 *****
49 (NE) **RED ZONE** Psygnosis £25.99 ***
50 (41) **THE ADDAMS FAMILY** Ocean £29.99 ***
51 (85) **ERIK** Atlantis £7.99 **
52 (64) **TEAM SUZUKI** GBH £7.99 ***
53 (NE) **SOCCER PINBALL** Codies £7.99 **
54 (57) **EMLYN HUGHES INT SOCCER** Touchdown £9.99 **
55 (NE) **KNIGHTS OF THE SKY** Microprose £34.99 *****
56 (NE) **LINKS** US Gold £35.99 ***
57 (RE) **BIRDS OF PREY** Electronic Arts £34.99 ****
58 (29) **PGA TOUR PLUS** Electronic Arts £29.99 ***
59 (NE) **ISHAR - LEGEND OF THE FORTRESS** Silmarils £29.99 ****
60 (86) **LEADERBOARD** Kixx £9.99 **
61 (46) **GO FOR GOLD** Kixx £7.99 **
62 (50) **POPEYE 2** Alternative £7.99 ****
63 (RE) **SWITCHBLADE 2** GBH £9.99 ****
64 (55) **PINBALL DREAMS** 21st Century Entertainment £25.99 *****
65 (38) **W.S CRICKET** Soundware £29.99 **
66 (84) **A320 AIRBUS** Thalion £35.99 **
67 (RE) **POPULOUS 2** Electronic Arts£29.99 ****
68 (NE) **D-GENERATION** Mindscape Classic £14.99 ****
69 (RE) **WORLD CHAMP BOXING** GBH £7.99 ***
70 (NE) **MEGA SPORTS** US Gold £25.99 **
71 (54) **EURO FOOTBALL CHAMP** Domark £25.99 ***
72 (35) **BATMAN THE MOVIE** Hit Squad £7.99 ****
73 (53) **SPACE CRUSADE** Gremlin £25.99 *****
74 (NE) **GOBLIIINS** Dream Factory £25.99 *****
75 (RE) **ROBOCOD** Millenium £25.99 ****
76 (NE) **ADS** Action 16 £9.99 ***
77 (69) **TOYOTA CELICA RALLY** GBH £7.99 ***
78 (28) **DUNE** Virgin £30.99 ****
79 (79) **OH NO! MORE LEMMINGS** Psygnosis £19.99 ***
80 (RE) **NARC** Hit Squad £7.99 **
81 (60) **GOLDEN AXE** Tronix £9.99 **
82 (RE) **GUNSHIP** Microprose £29.99 ****
83 (56) **TREAS. ISLAND DIZZY** Codies £7.99 **
84 (43) **DIZZYS EXCELLENT ADVENTURES** Codies £24.99 ***
85 (65) **LITTLE PUFF** Code Masters £6.99 **
86 (61) **INT 3D TENNIS** GBH £7.99 **
87 (RE) **MAN UTD EUROPE** Krisalis £25.99 ***
88 (RE) **CHUCK ROCK** Core Design £25.54 ***
89 (RE) **ULTIMATE GOLF** GBH Gold £9.99 **
90 (68) **BUBBLE BOBBLE** Hit Squad £7.99 ***
91 (RE) **CENTURION** Star Performers £10.99 **
92 (36) **F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II** Microprose £29.99 ****
93 (80) **SHADOW WARRIORS** Hit Squad £7.99 **
94 (RE) **FALCON - OP FIREFIGHT** Action 16 £9.99 ***
95 (94) **ROBOCOP 3** Ocean £25.99 ****
96 (RE) **GOLDRUSH COLLECTION** Soundware £25.99 ***
97 (RE) **SILENT SERVICE 2** Microprose £34.99****
98 (NE) **SOOTY AND SWEEP** Alternative £7.99 *
99 (81) **CHASE HQ** Hit Squad £7.99 *
100 (99) **Z-OUT** Kixx £7.99 *

We figure you must have some idea how the charts work by now, so briefly: they're © ELSPA, they mix budgies and full pricers together, games are rated in stars, and now they're sponsored by Penguin!

CAPTAIN DYNAMO

Despite our unbelievably tight review last month Code Master's latest platform game leaps into the top twenty. Code Masters now have nine titles in the charts, more than most software houses could even dream about. They now have three titles poised to break into the top ten. Look out for them next month to see if they do it.

JACK NICKLAUS GOLF



Jack drives his way into the top 20 this month and leaves himself just a chip and a putt away from the top ten. Being in the top ten is par for the course for big Jack and now he's been re-released on budget he looks as though he'll get there again.

CHARTS
COMPILED BY GALLUP
SPONSORED BY PENGUIN BISCUITS
ELSPA
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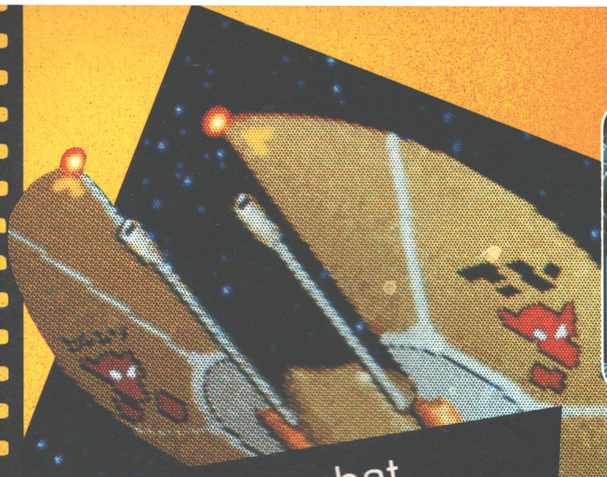
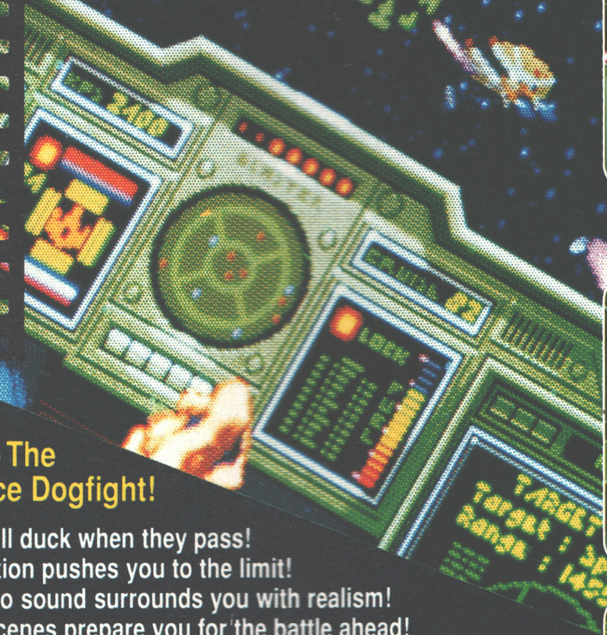


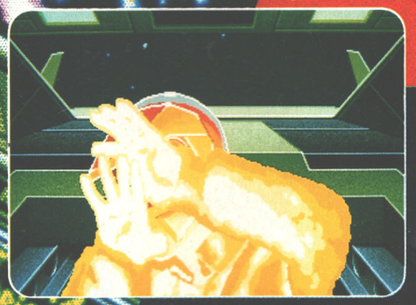
Navigate dense asteroid fields!

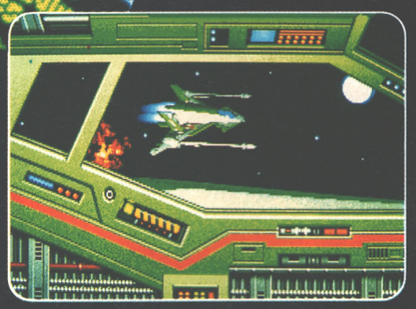
The award winning Space Combat Simulation. Available soon for the Amiga!



Battle breathtaking alien aces!

Can you meet the challenge?





PC screens shown. Amiga screens may vary.

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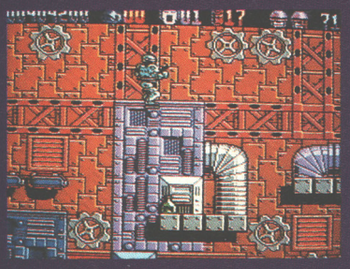
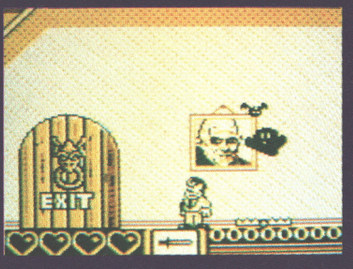
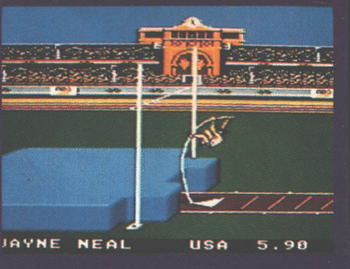


ROBOCOP 2 FOR THE NES RATED 72%
MEAN MACHINE / MARCH 1992

LEMMINGS FOR THE SUPER NES RATED 93%
CVG / MARCH 1992

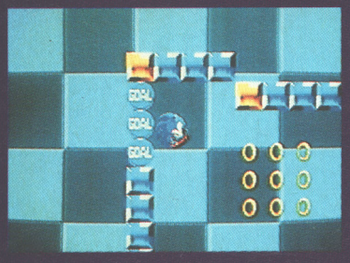


ADDAMS FAMILY FOR THE GAME BOY RATED 52%
GO! / MAY 1992

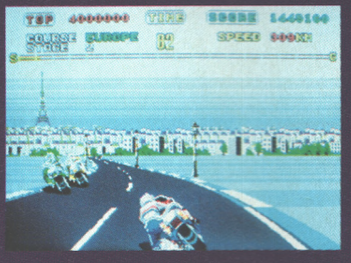


OLYMPIC GOLD FOR THE MEGADRIVE RATED 70%
MEAN MACHINE / JUNE 1992

TAZ M
MEGAI
SEGAPR

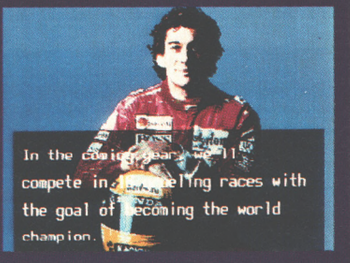


SONIC THE HEDGEHOG FOR THE GAME GEAR RATED 89%
SEGAPRO / JANUARY 1991



SUPER HANG ON FOR THE MEGADRIVE RATED 89%
COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE MEGADRIVE / DECEMBER 1991

FINAL FIGHT FOR THE SUPER NES RATED 88%
CVG / AUGUST 1992

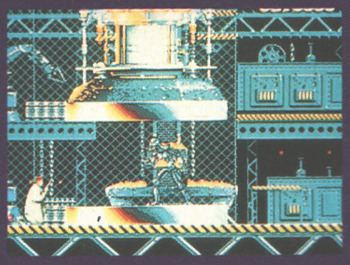


SENNA SUPER MONACO FOR THE MEGADRIVE RATED 89% CVG / JULY 1992

SPIDE
BOY
GO! /

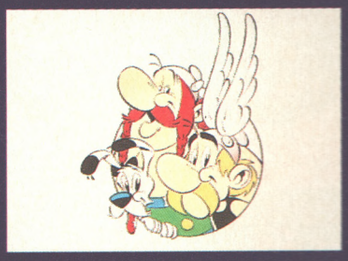
HERE'S HOW THE MAG
THE TOP GAMES.
CHECK OUT IF THEY'
AT THE GAMESMASTER

TAZ MANIA FOR THE MEGADRIVE RATED 93%
SEGAPRO / AUGUST 1992



TERMINATOR FOR THE MEGADRIVE AND THE MASTER SYSTEM RATED 90% SEGAPRO / JUNE 1992

SPIDERMAN FOR THE GAME BOY RATED 93%
GO! / AUGUST 1992



ASTERIX FOR THE MASTER SYSTEM RATED 90%
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AGS RATE

Y'RE RIGHT

ER ZONE.

Are some of these favourable reviews a tad too enthusiastic? Are some of the negative ones a gnats' too critical?

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And not just boxed behind the counter, but loaded up and ready to play in our demonstration units.

By now the doubting Thomases amongst you may be thinking we're telling a few wobblies ourselves.

Well Tom, check out the Gamesmaster Zone in your local Comet.

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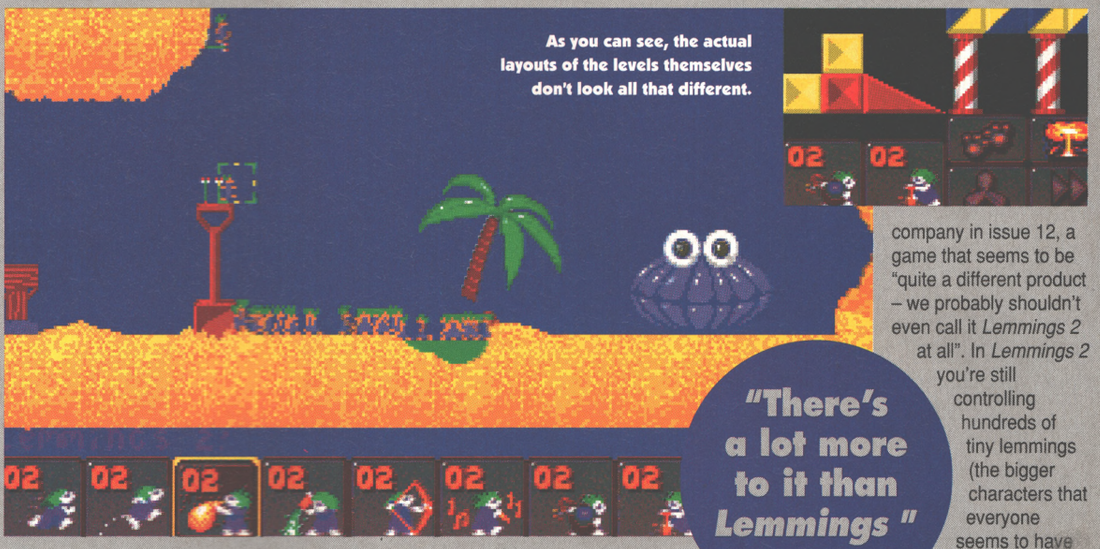
THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

Clairvoyants, eh? They're okay, but can they tell you anything about future Amiga games? No. We can...

LEMMI



As you can see, the actual layouts of the levels themselves don't look all that different.

Game: Lemmings 2
Publisher: Psygnosis
Authors: DMA Design
ETA: Christmas

Briefly: Well, it's just the same as *Lemmings* really, isn't it?
The creators speak: "No! No! It's not the same as *Lemmings* at all!", screamed a near-apoplectic DMA Design when I suggested to them that this eagerly-awaited sequel was, shall we say, not really all that radically different from its legendary predecessor. After all, a cursory glance at the screenshots on these pages doesn't really suggest, as Ian Hetherington of Psygnosis claimed in our giant feature on the company in issue 12, a game that seems to be "quite a different product – we probably shouldn't even call it *Lemmings 2* at all". In *Lemmings 2* you're still controlling hundreds of tiny lemmings (the bigger characters that everyone seems to have been expecting aren't there), and the aim is still to get them to an exit at the end of a scrolling level. The levels now scroll vertically as well as horizontally, and there's a weird plotline involving lots of different tribes of lemmings, but the core of the gameplay is more or less the same. But hang on a minute. Despite what certain other publications appear to believe, you can't judge a game from screenshots alone, so let's take a slightly closer look at the game they HAVE decided, after all, to call *Lemmings 2*.

"There's a lot more to it than *Lemmings*"

"I don't know where everyone got the idea that *Lemmings 2* was going to be quite so radically different to the original," says DMA's Dave Jones. "All this stuff about bigger graphics and a completely different game style was just a vicious rumour. We did have a few ideas about how we were going to tackle the sequel, and bigger characters were suggested at one early point, but the idea never made it off the drawing board. Or maybe Psygnosis just had different

Caber-tossing and tube-shooting are probably high on these lems' priority lists.

The Circus tribe of lemmings have all manner of Big Top-related scenery to admire

NGS 2

ideas about the game than we did... "

But get past the screenshots and there's no denying that this IS a very different game.

"For a start, there are now over 60 different kinds of lemming, although obviously they don't all appear on the same levels. There are ballooning lemmings that you can blow around with a fan, archer lemmings that fire arrows to burst other lems' balloons or build bridges (arrows stick in the landscape and can be fired into each other to provide complex structures), human cannonball lemmings who'll light the fuse on a cannon then climb into it to get fired across the screen, and the old blockers have been replaced with musical lemmings who play tunes which force any lem in earshot to stop in their tracks and dance." (Shades of Uncle Ted...).

It's a lot harder to get your little charges killed in *Lemmings 2*, too – only a really long fall will kill them, with shorter plunges stunning them.

Some lems get ready to kick the bucket (sorry...)

"You couldn't actually get them killed at all until very recently, but the game's still evolving even as we write it," says Dave. But isn't there a danger that people will be disappointed when they first see it?

"They may be, but then the same thing happened with the first *Lemmings* – it didn't initially look like much, but it didn't take long for it to get its hooks into you. I think it'll only take a few minutes to find out just how much there is under the surface of this game – in that respect I think it's on a par with the likes of *Super Mario World*."

Is the vastly-increased depth of *Lemmings 2* perhaps an admission that the original game was actually very repetitive once you got into it?

"I don't think it was, actually, the structure of it was such that it changed a lot within its framework as you went on, but with *Lemmings 2* what we've done is write something that's less of an out-and-out puzzle game and more of an arcade thing. Some people might prefer the first game, because it was maybe a bit easier to get into, whereas with this one you're always being forced to learn new skills."

Just one small corner of a strange and foreign land that's forever *Lemmings*.

So how does Dave rate *Lemmings 2*'s chances as we come up to the big battle for Christmas Number One?

"Well, clearly this isn't a completely original product, but I don't see why it shouldn't be just as big a hit – there's a lot more to it than there was to the first game. What anyone's seen so far is just a tiny fraction of what's going to be in the finished thing, there are so many features that nobody knows anything about. *Street Fighter II* is the game everyone seems to think will be the one to beat, but I'm not sure how well that's going to translate to a one-button Amiga joystick. It remains to be seen how good a programming job they do on it, but yes, I do fancy our chances whatever happens. *Lemmings 2* has been in development for eighteen months, and when you buy it I think you'll realise why."

Some daredevil lemmings perform the amazing 'living waterfall' routine.

Verdict so far: So there you have it. *Lemmings 2* might indeed look almost exactly like its illustrious forebear, but it promises to offer a quite tangibly different gameplay experience. Personally I'm going to miss the squeaky 'Oh no!' of an exploding lem and the sudden rush of panic you used to get when you realised that a whole pack of the little blighters were about to plunge to their death over a cliff that was just a pixel too high, but in every other way this looks like a significant improvement on one of the best games of all time. After the relative failure of *Oh No! More Lemmings*, though, it's going to have to be. There's a lot riding on this one.

● *STUART CAMPBELL*

LIFE IS JUST A BOWL OF ICONS

As you can see, this level features at least one completely new thing that wasn't present in the original *Lemmings*. Er, hurrah! (We think)

The exit, which for some reason isn't open at this precise moment in time. Oh dear

The box at bottom right offers you a pause, an apocalypse, a handy fan and an even handier fast-forward facility

This lemming will run twice as fast as normal until something stops him

Whereas this one will take a gigantic one-off leap into the wide yonder

Click this icon to soar into the skies on a fast-moving hot-air balloon

Empty that bucket of green slime and fill up whatever's near and empty

Take an arrow and shoot it at a little lemming's heart today...

Why not stop a while, sing a happy song, and have a bit of a dance?

Bang! It's that old favourite, the exploding lemming. Or is it?

GUNSHIP 2000

Game: Gunship 2000
Publisher: Microprose
Authors: Kevin Buckner, Mark James, Mark Langerack (Amiga)
ETA: November

In addition to all that really clever 3D action going on outside, the copter has a camera which offers a close-up 3D view of the target.

The entire landscape of *Gunship 2000* is mapped out in painstaking detail, with rivers mountains, valleys, the works.

Of course, this being a hi-tech game, it's possible to set an auto height adjuster. Handy for avoiding large mountains.

Briefly: Chopper buffs will no doubt realise that *Gunship 2000* is the successor to the original heli-sim, *Gunship*.

MicroProse's new chopper sim offers the player even more multi-copter options – you'll be able to choose up to three types of helicopter from the seven offered. Furthermore, you can take up to five on any one mission. You'll be flying your chopper solo or leading a squadrons on search and destroy missions through Central Europe and the Persian Gulf. But this doesn't mean that you'll be limited in any way in mission choice – *Gunship 2000*'s game structure enables you to designate any preferred mission.

Among the options offered you'll find a useful training section and the facility for single and multiple helicopter missions. But the main attraction for any serious 'copter freak is the campaign game. This features a useful combat map showing the main tides of the battle. During the campaign game you're almost certain to come across the mission builder. It's one of the most innovative aspects of the game enabling you to design and edit your own missions.

A great deal of attention has been paid to the graphics – landscape detail is surprisingly realistic. Such realism has been achieved with the aid of a new landscaping system dubbed Topographical 3D. You'll find terrain with depressions, such as river banks and valleys and elevations such as mountains and buildings. There are bound to be comparisons drawn between the ground detail of *Gunship* and DI's *Tornado*. True, *Gunship* doesn't look as detailed as *Tornado*, but it's still fairly impressive for an Amiga conversion.

The creators speak: All conversion graphics and programming have been carried out in house by the MicroProse team. Kevin Buckner and Mark Langerack who both worked on the *Knights Of The Sky* conversion for the Amiga, are now at the helm of the *Gunship* conversion.

Jonathan Oldham, is Project Manager for the *Gunship 2000* project. He explained how the Amiga version had been converted from its PC stablemate.

"To achieve the frame rate of the PC version we simplified and speeded up routines. With the line of sight routine for example, we used a mathematical formula instead of the PC's imaginary bullet routine. You'll also find that we've improved the artificial intelligence of the wingman."

So does the Amiga version include any additional features?

"Yes it does. Unlike the PC version we now have a waypoint facility on the map in the second level to improve navigation. We're also trying to make the missiles act more realistically in the Amiga conversion."

The Amiga conversion team have also touched up a few of the PC problems, such as the TADS (Target Acquisition Display), which proved a little too unreliable at times.

"Landscape detail is surprisingly realistic"

Verdict so far: It's critical that a heli-sim achieves a feeling of speed. Unfortunately *Gunship* on the Amiga is a lot slower than its PC counterpart. But don't be downhearted, there's still time for improvement. After all, MicroProse's track record for flight sim conversions has been very good – *Knights Of The Sky* being the obvious example. Indeed the latter proved to be far better on the Amiga.

A first glance at *Gunship* doesn't reveal enough to warrant full appraisal, but it does seem to be shaping well against its acclaimed PC stablemate. Lack of pace is critical and although ground detail is there, we'd like to see it move faster.

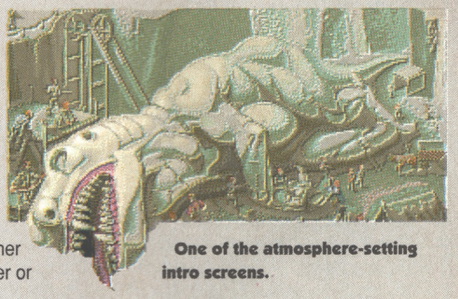
● *MATTHEW SQUIRES*

The real beauty of flying in a helicopter is the ability to skim the ground in spectacular style. Here, we see the 'copter about to swing down into the safety of a valley.

Game: The Chaos Engine
Publisher: Renegade
Authors: Steve Cargill and Mike Montgomery (code), Simon Knight and Eric Matthews (design), Dan Malone (graphics), Richard Joseph (sound fx)

Briefly: The Bitmap Brothers turn their attentions to multi-directional scrolling, multi-player shoot-'em-ups, with a game not unlike *Speedball 2* meets *Total Carnage*. Two players, or one and the computer (more of that later), each get to select a gun-toting mercenary, then fight through 16 levels spanning four H G Wellsian worlds, in an effort to destroy The Chaos Engine – a machine which is disrupting the fabric of space and time, and has (coincidentally) transformed the previously pleasant inhabitants of the surrounding area into ravenous mutants.

THE CHAOS ENGINE



One of the atmosphere-setting intro screens.

And so... ahem... chaos ensues. **The Creators Speak:** The mixture of sci-fi and the steam age is suspiciously similar to William Gibson and Bruce Sterling's 'cyber-steam' novel, The Difference Engine. But, as Eric Matthews says, "It's coincidence. We've been working on *The Chaos Engine* for two years now. The idea actually came about in an effort to devise a scenario a bit more imaginative than the usual 'defend the earth from the aliens' plot."

"Destined to be up there with Lemmings 2"

Perhaps the most astounding technical feat of *Chaos* is way the computer guides a second mercenary in one-player mode – it actually feels like playing alongside a human counterpart. It makes a refreshing change from lonely solo modes and worthless computer drones.

Eric Matthews explains: "It took an incredible amount of time to achieve, but we're happy with the results. We actually tried bringing people into the office, sitting them alongside another person holding a joystick, then challenging them to guess whether the other fighter was under player or computer control."

The strategy element in *The Chaos Engine* is heightened by the use of character statistics, which can be gradually improved as the game progresses. In one-player mode, the computer-controlled mercenary has a statistic governing his mental ability. As the levels get progressively more complex, so your money can be spent boosting the secondary player's intelligence.

"We actually refined the intelligence routines to the point where the computer could complete the game for you," reckons Eric. "Obviously we had to pull back, we didn't want to make it too easy."

In play *The Chaos Engine* echoes such classic violent arcade blasters as *Total Carnage* (the successor to *Smash TV*), with its scrolling levels, bonus objects, and apocalyptic power-ups. But, as usual, there is a number of clever things going on in the background.

Eric: "There's a fair bit of problem-solving and strategy required in the game, but everything can be achieved with a gun. The idea is to make it instantly playable, but offer hidden rooms, alternative pathways, and other neat touches – to give the player new things to do each time."

And, as is par for the course in Bitmap products, the game world will adjust subtly to suit the player's abilities. Fare badly, and the mutants won't be quite so ferocious, but act cowardly and it'll be evident in the scores.

Verdict So Far: It looks like *The Chaos Engine* will be up there with *Lemmings 2* this Christmas – critically and commercially. less than it deserves.

● *MARK RAMSHAW*

Between levels, check your status and tweak your weapons.

Power-up frenzy near the end of world one. Take that mutant scum.

MIRACLE

Robert Maxwell's 'accident' was bad news for thousands of pensioners. But not for Amiga players, for his demise inspired coding veteran Delvin Sorrell to form development team Miracle Games at the beginning of this year. He was soon joined by another old hand, Graeme Ashton, and now the outfit is a dozen strong.

The team's portfolio includes many budget C64 titles for the now defunct Telecomsoft to conversions of such delicacies as *Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles* for the Amiga and *Xenon 2: Megablast* for CDTV. Their philosophy is simple: produce quality product on time. "On time's the important point," says Delvin. "We're not going to stick to any one style either – it totally limits what you can do." Gary Penn investigates...

ZYCONIX

Publisher: Accolade
Authors: Delvin Sorrel (Design & Coding), Debbie Sorrell (Visuals & Design), Jeremy Ashton (Front End Visuals), Henry Jackman (Sound & Music)
ETA: November 11th

Briefly: *Zyconix* is yet another one of those arcade puzzlers, only this one seems to be thrown up as a result of digesting *Arkanoid*, *Columns* and *Tetris* and a few other titles of those ilks.

In *Zyconix*, coloured blocks fall down the screen into a pit and are picked up and dropped to form lines, which disappear. Special features make an occasional appearance and include a ball which is used with an ad hoc bat to knock out the blocks below. There's even a shoot-'em-up section to be played for bonus points.

Zyconix's action is accompanied by four impressive pieces music which correspond to the variations of play on offer. Each version (for one or two players) is named after a character to suit the mood. Louis' Jazz provides the basic theme, while Dazza's Rave features the bonus stage shoot-'em-up. Spry's Funk is played against the clock, with indestructible junk blocks appearing at the bottom of the pit (the two player version is competitive, with the familiar GameBoy *Tetris* twist of feeding each other indestructible blocks by competing lines). Finally, there's Shazza's Soul race against clock in which the timer is extended by completing levels.

"The result of digesting Arkanoid, Columns and Tetris"

The Creators Speak: "The idea was mine and my wife Debbie's," says Delvin. "We wanted something fun to play so this is it. And would you believe I've only just got to see *Columns*."

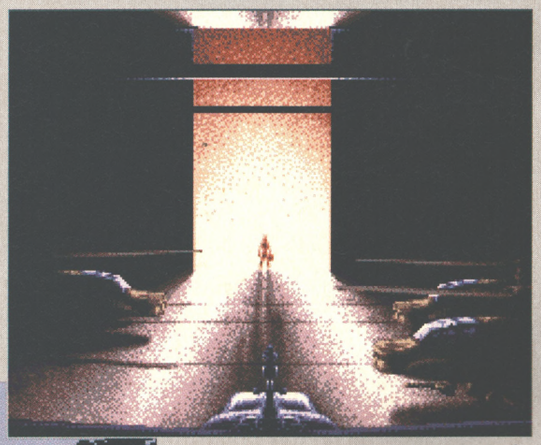
Verdict So Far: Could well be as successful as *Klax*, *Tetris* and others of that infuriatingly addictive ilk.

APOCALYPSE

Publisher: Virgin Games Software
Authors: Strangeways (Original Design), Frank Szendzielarz (Code), Dokk (Visuals), Henry Jackman (Sounds & Music)
ETA: Easter 1993

Briefly: If you were to put your hand into the bag of tricks that is *Apocalypse* you'd pull out fragments of *Defender*, *Choplifter*, *Fort Apocalypse* and other like-minded Commodore 64 favourites of old. *Apocalypse* is so-called because its action is reminiscent of that stunning bit in the Apocalypse Now film where entire villages are wasted with napalm.

The action takes place on the insignificant island of Majipoor, home to a heavily-armed enemy force holding captive hundreds of prisoners of war. The player's on a rescue mission in a top chopper, braving flak, missiles, rockets and bullets (you don't see those - just the muzzle flashes) to pick up PoWs and deposit them in a safe zone.



A seldom seen scene of Dokk's atmospheric animated introductory sequence.

However, the chopper has limited space to carry the desperate men, and its handling is affected when there are too many on board. Miracle Games are discussing the possibilities of having any enemy explosions close to the chopper damaging it and disrupting its behaviour in flight, and perhaps some of the valuable passengers will be killed, too.

The idea is to provide realistic chopper handling without sacrificing playability for the sake of a perfect flight simulation.

The chopper's firepower is boosted with rockets, heat-seeking missiles and napalm - all acquired from supply boxes on the ground. The hardware is used to destroy enemy outposts, soldiers, and even the PoWs. Only the flora and fauna remains intact. And yet, somehow, through the chaos comes order enough to provide the necessary playability.

The Creators Speak: "We've basically taken over *Apocalypse* where Strangeways left off," says Miracle Games boss Delvin Sorrell. "There's still the three scrolling layers of parallax – the silhouetted scenery in the background, the graduated skyline and the foreground objects for added depth. And you can still destroy practically everything.

"We've got loads of special effects - machine guns, multi-layered explosions, screams, flames... We're now trying to fit it all into half a meg."

Verdict So Far: *Apocalypse* is certainly living up to its name. The wholesale destruction packs a mean punch in every department but it remains to be seen whether the four levels will provide enough scope for appreciating the action, even if they do repeat with added difficulty.

The first of four explosive-mendous levels is a dense (duh?) jungle.

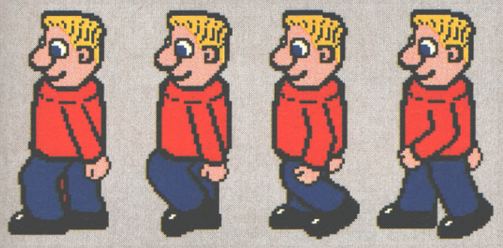
GAMES

DICK SPECIAL

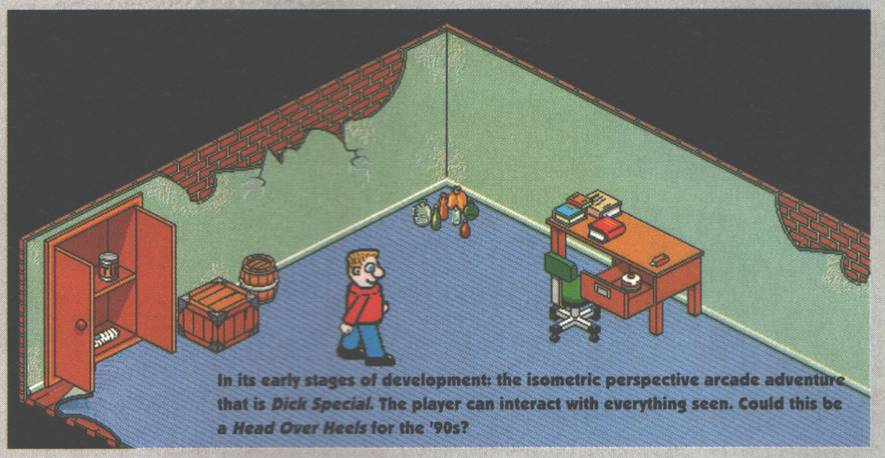
Publisher: TBA
Authors: Gordon Leggatt (Design), Delvin Sorrel & Graeme Ashton (Code), Jeremy Ashton (Visuals)
ETA: TBA

Briefly: Miracle Games are looking to produce a fully interactive animated cartoon with a main character of 108 pixels high. That character is Dick Special, a private detective out to recover and reassemble his mutilated teddy bear (aah) and bring the chummy (villains) responsible to justice.

As the bad guys are discovered (there's no telling where they might be hiding, so don't forget to check the wardrobe, vicar) and captured and taken to the local nick, the respective Wanted posters inside Dick's portable office (a whole furnished room which springs up from a suitcase) curl up and fall from the wall to the floor.



Dick Special combines elements of arcade adventure, and slap-stick and situation comedy with cartoon and comic book quirks (Dick 'converses' with the player through thought bubbles).



In its early stages of development: the isometric perspective arcade adventure that is *Dick Special*. The player can interact with everything seen. Could this be a *Head Over Heels* for the '90s?

Nothing is what it seems. During the search for villains there are dozens of puzzles to solve, most of them bizarre (strings of sausages and dehydrated and inflatable people are three of the more peculiar objects to be found) but all of them logical. Clues are often staring the player in the face, and because Dick has a character of his own, he won't do anything foolish if he doesn't think it's a good idea.

This is the third attempt at bringing *Dick Special* to the Amiga (it almost resurfaced through Activision as *The Captain Is Dead*, but it was swallowed up when the company ran into problems and changed hands in 1991), and it looks as though this time he will make it.

The Creators Speak: "It's a completely new game. All that's the same is the character's name," says Delvin. "We're redesigning the Dick character at the moment.

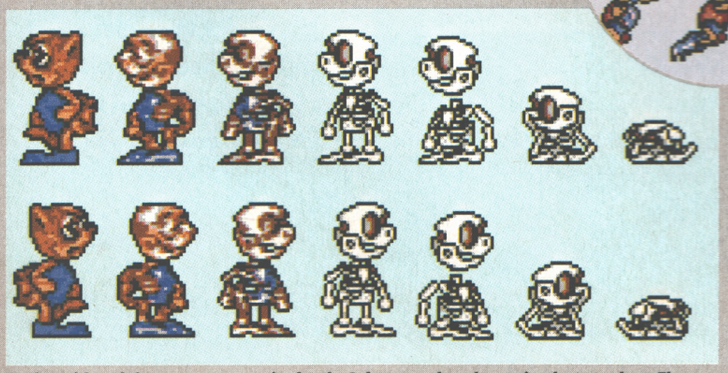
"We haven't approached many publishers yet. We're still looking but we're concentrating on making it primarily a console product."

Verdict So Far: *Dick Special* looks and sounds different, that's for sure. It could carve a niche of its own. Or it could end up like the wooden car with wooden wheels and a wooden engine. At this early stage it's fair to say that *Dick Special* is very interesting and certainly one to look out for.

THE BOUNCY BAT GAME (WORKING TITLE)

Authors: Delvin Sorrell (Design & Code) & The Miracle Games Team
Publisher: TBA
ETA: TBA

Briefly: A tribute, if you will, to the likes of Mario and Sonic The Hedgehog. The *Bouncy Bat Game* (so called because the hero is a bat-like creature who can – no! – bounce, among other things) is at a very early stage in its development, which is why it currently involves little more than running around a contoured landscape and collecting coins. The sky's the limit as far as features are concerned though, and Miracle Games have plenty of fun ones planned, so they say.



In the midst of the game, we are in death. Ashes to ashes, bouncing bats to dust. These are the animation sprites for the death of our brave hero.

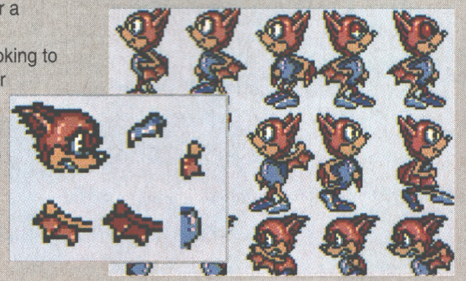
The Creators Speak: "We've got it running at 50 frames a second, which is as fast as it can go. It's as fast as *Sonic*, but everyone seems to be doing *Sonic*-type games so we want to go for something more like *Super Mario World*.

We're using the Amiga's hardware for the parallax scrolling. The foreground and background have eight colours each, and the sprites have 16 colours, which is more than enough for a colourful game.

"We're looking to have 100 levels or so across different worlds, with loads of hidden rooms and bonuses. We did have a Candyland and an Iceland and some other graphics but since *Zool*'s come out with that sort of stuff in it we've scrapped all the scenery and started again. It's a product that has to stand up on its own merits and not everyone else's.

"We'll certainly have some full screen, fully animated Boss characters. The link between the levels is tubes. The bat curls up into ball and spins through the tubes, with the scrolling running at 16 pixels at 50 frames a second. That's very fast indeed. The product will probably end up being one meg only because we're putting so much in it. We still have to find a publisher for it, though."

Verdict So Far: Technically, *The Bouncy Bat Game* wouldn't be out of place on a console or even in an arcade. There's huge potential for a run 'n' jump romp to beat them all. Let's hope the design will live up to the expectations set by the technical achievements. ●



The animation frames for the star of The Bouncy Bat Game. At the moment he has 90 frames for one direction only and catering for movements such as running, jumping, headbutting, throwing fruit and flying. The bat will also be able to interact with other characters - say, riding docile creatures - and swim underwater.

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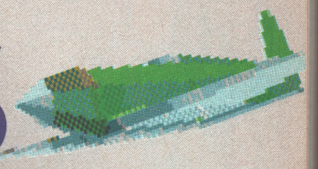
REACH FOR THE SKIES



Game: Reach For The Skies
Publisher: Virgin
Authors: Rowan
ETA: October

Briefly: Imagine yourself as a pilot in the Battle of Britain, the most terrific fight for air supremacy seen in the Second World War. Here's a game that offers you the option of either pilot or controller. As a controller you set up the attack or response to attack, and then, as pilot, you lead your squadron into battle at the flight controls of any of a number of World War 2 planes.

You can fly for the Luftwaffe or the RAF. As controller of the Luftwaffe your aim is to reduce the RAF strength to three quarters of its original level. To achieve this you must use certain strategies – destroying aircraft in the air, or knocking out aircraft factories. The aim of the RAF controller is to stop the latter.

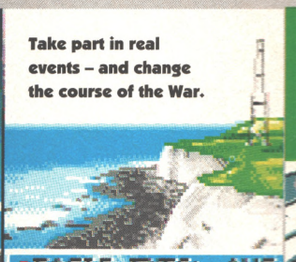
As pilot, your aim is simply to stay alive during battle and to work your way up the aces table, not unlike Microprose's *Knights Of The Sky*. Piloting on either side enables close aerial manoeuvres, and demands controlled flight strategy.

Reach For The Skies certainly has a well structured game scenario, but what about the mechanics? Here you have the choice of control via mouse, keyboard or the more authentic flight analogue joystick. An autopilot recentralises your flight path if you happen to go off course and gets you back into the thick of the action by redirecting you to the combat target. It's also possible to do this manually by referring to the map screen.

"The fun is in the close aerial combat"

Well executed external views give you just about every angle you require to find the target – zoom in and out or rotate horizontally and vertically.

Reach For The Skies features eight different, historically and technically accurate aircraft, from Spitfires to Heinkels. You'll find that true to life, the planes vary in speed and power – Rowan took into account the technical specifications of each different plane and fed it into the game.



No Head-Up-Displays here, mate, don't you know there's a war on?

The creators speak: We talked to Rod Hyde, who not only designed the game, but is also project manager. What was the most important aspect of the game's development?

"The fact that we wanted to get a lot of aircraft in the sky, meant we had to concentrate our effort on creating the artificial intelligence. There are many, many possible interactions between aircraft and aircraft, and aircraft and controllers. This means that not only can you have two games in one, but you're also able to move between aeroplanes."

So how did you achieve this multi-interaction?

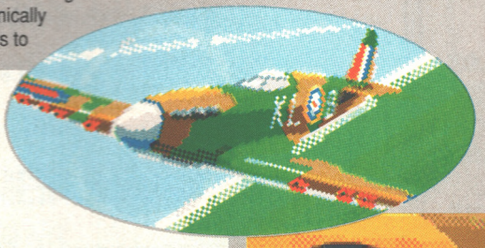
"Basically the method is to send information packets between aircraft. The fun of the game as far as we're concerned is close aerial combat."

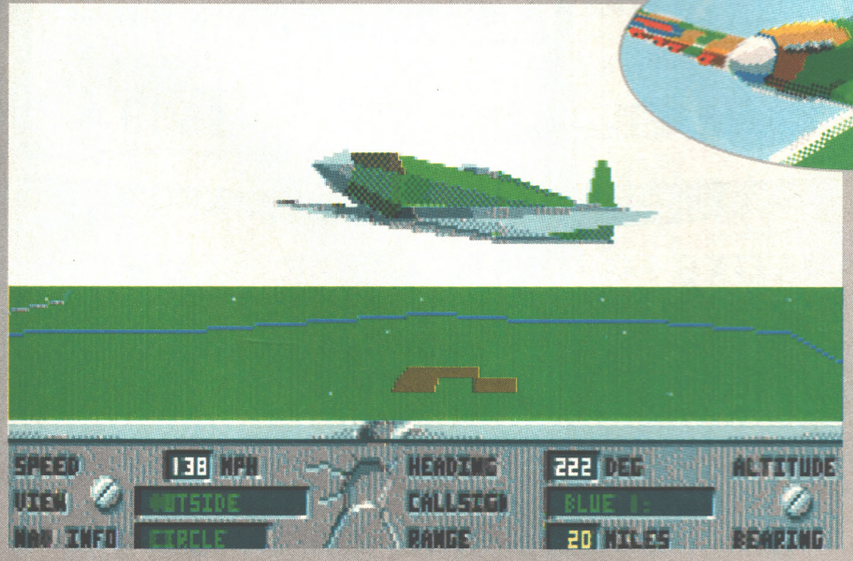
How did you achieve the historical and highly detailed authenticity?

"We went to RAF Hendon's research library and the Imperial War Museum to go through photograph and sound archives. Our artist, Mark Shaw, actually got into the cockpits of aircraft at Hendo, to sketch the cockpit instrumentation. It was so dark the video didn't work so we had someone illuminate the cockpit with a torch."

Verdict so far: It does look on course to be one of the better flight combat sims – plenty of variety is provided through the Luftwaffe/RAF and Pilot/Controller options. Strategy and planning are left to the player, while controls and handling are as authentic as you could imagine. Rowan have gone one better than the ever-popular *Knights of the Sky*.

● *MATTHEW SQUIRES*





3D action and fetching menus screens. Pipe not included, sadly.

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JUST WHO DO WE THINK WE ARE?

MARK RAMSHAW

Young Mark's weight remains his most pressing concern. It's just that now he's worried about how much weight he's lost since he took over as editor. He can't win.

Mark's favourite smells are cinnamon bagels, Play-Doh and strawberry body lotion.

ADAM PETERS

Adam has been making up for Mark's poor performance in the nutrition stakes and has devoted his spare time to eating and becoming fat. Not much of a life for a young man.

Adam's favourite smells are strawberries (that old favourite) with mangoes a close second.

STUART CAMPBELL

Stuart's expensive dental work continues. The rest of us think this is great, not because we wish the lad any pain, but because he can't talk when he gets back from the dentist's.

Stuart's favourite smells are girls, vinegar, strawberries and napalm in the morning.

JONATHAN DAVIES

Jonathan's been working terribly hard to get the first issue of our new sister mag ready. It's for SNES owners and it's called Super Play. Is that a good enough plug for you, JD?

Jonathan's favourite smell is fresh mown hay. And the scary thing is that we believe him.

TIM NORRIS

Tim's been tending to his garden this month. Each morning he gives us detailed reports on how well his grass has grown since we last saw him. Thanks, that's fascinating.

Tim's favourite smells are Coco (by Chanel), creosote, coconut pyramids and bananas.

MATTHEW SQUIRES

It was Matt's stag night this month. Very little actual damage was caused, no one was particularly badly hurt and insurance claims are expected to be uncharacteristically low.

Matthew's favourite smells are garlic, liver and onions, and freshly baked chocolate cake.

GARY PENN

Gary spent most of the month resting after the rigors of having to write the Autumn Preview and Where Are They Now? for last month's issue. When he was properly rested he counted his money.

Gary's favourite smells are pesto, fresh juice and fresh sweat (before it goes all yucky).

LES ELLIS

Les's life really seems to be coming together. Not only has he got a great job with the best-selling Amiga games magazine, he also got engaged. Congratulations, Les – the drinks are on you.

Les's favourite smells are ice cold Coke™ and his mum's roast dinners. Refreshingly normal.

JACQUIE SPANTON

Disappointed by the lack of offers to be made bionic, Jacquie's been taking things easy this month. She tried bursting a tennis ball with her bare hand but it hurt her wrist.

Jacquie's favourite smells are Orange Twixes and Dettol. Clean and wholesome.

DAVE GOLDER

"I hate this bit – I've never done anything interesting." Make something up then. "I went to the moon, will that do?" We're not sure anyone's going to believe you but it *is* interesting.

Dave's favourite smell is freshly baked bread (he waxed lyrical on the subject for ages).

SALLY MEDDINGS

Another landmark for daughter Eliza – this month Sal's been laughing at her learning to walk. At least she was until she realised that it looked like her when she was drunk.

Sally's favourite smells are freshly baked bread, Espresso coffee and Sainsbury's coconut soap.

RICH PELLEY

Rich hasn't actually contributed anything to the magazine this month, but we enjoy using this photo. Oh, and he did very well in his A levels. Congratulations, Rich.

Rich's favourite smells are Old Spice, rum and pieces of eight. Yo ho ho.

RICHARD LONGHURST

More family fun for Richard who took a spot of paternity leave for the birth of the latest Longhurst. So he's just been taking the time to enjoy playing with his children. Bless him.

Richard's favourite smells are maternity wards and NappySan. It could have been worse...

RONNIE RANDALL

This month Ronnie was taken by limousine to the airport, and flown (by private jet) to Switzerland to meet Dieter Meier (of Yello)'s dog. And, for once, we didn't make that up.

Ronnie's favourite smells are limousines, alpine breezes and flea spray.

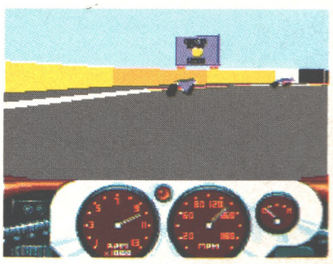
GAMES

Sob... the summer was over, but we're not down-hearted, oh no. What it means is that we've got loads of great new titles to play and – yes! – even write about. We just couldn't be happier. And you, you lucky reader...for you, we've still got a magazine packed with more great stuff than you can shake a hand-carved oak stick at.

***Pool* – Archer Maclean does it again.**

So read on for reviews of Archer Maclean's follow-up to *Snooker* – *Pool*; a platform funster – *Doodlebug*; a cyber-punk arcade adventure – *BAT2*; an utterly fabulous shooty fighty wonderful adventure – *Assassin*; and tons, frankly, more.

We've got the latest budget releases as well as PD and shareware beyond the dreams of the most incredibly tight-fisted. What more could an AMIGA POWER reader possibly want? (Apart, that is, from love, peace, happiness and obscene quantities of cash.)



***Red Zone* – great, or a crashing bore?**

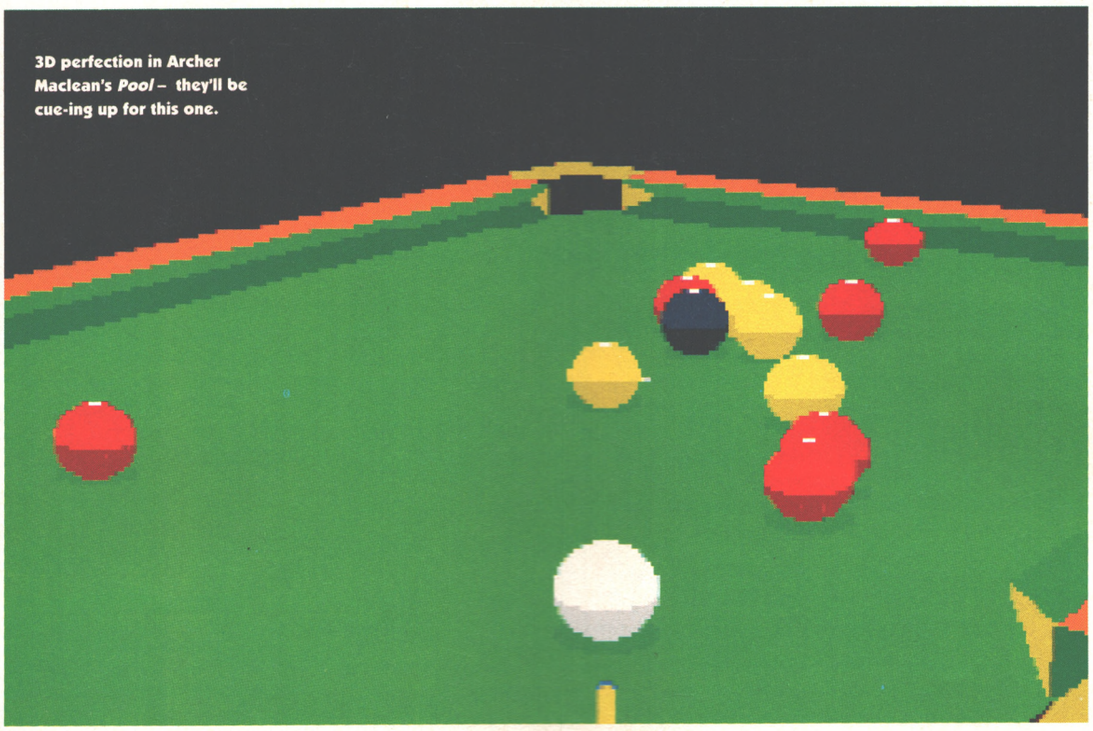
THE AMIGA POWER SCORING SYSTEM (AND HOW IT WORKS): AN EASY-TO-USE BEGINNERS GUIDE

The AMIGA POWER reviewing philosophy is an absolute doddle to understand. No, really, it's simple. But if you're reading this at all you must want to know at least a little bit more, so here, in all its glory, is The Way We Do Things At AMIGA POWER....

1) We're all aware of how much software costs, which is why we believe a game has to be *really* good to be worth buying – *or* worth giving a good mark. Happily, there's more than enough top-notch stuff around if you only look – we mark as hard as we do to prevent you from wasting time (or money!) on the bad ones. You'll thank us for it in the end...

2) We believe rating systems should be simple and easy to understand. That's why we just give one mark out of 100, a few summing up sentences, and that's it. What more is there?

3) A third point? Good point.



3D perfection in Archer Maclean's *Pool* – they'll be cue-ing up for this one.

Game: Pool
Publisher: Virgin
Author: Archer Maclean
Price: £25.99
Release: End of October

POOL

Sequels, eh? Love 'em or hate 'em, these days you can't avoid 'em. Still, at least this one's not called *Snooker 2*.

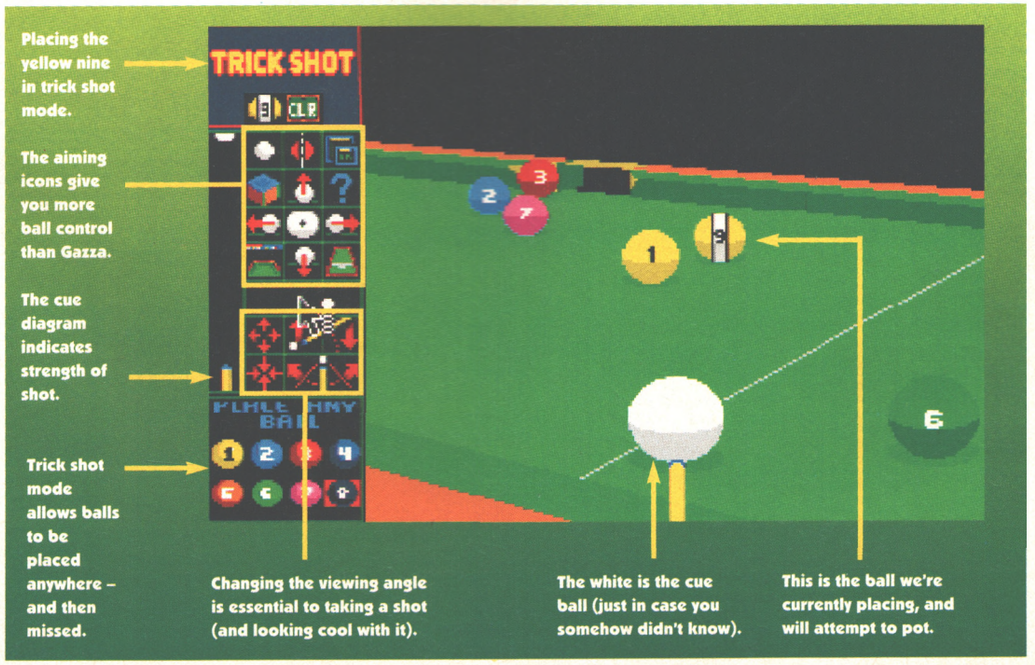
Three pages? THREE PAGES? For God's sake, Mark... Okay, okay, calm down, Stu. You're a professional journalist, you can cope with this. I mean, how difficult can it possibly be to write three pages of review on a game which everybody in the world already owns in a slightly different incarnation? I mean, think of all the shared experiences you'll be able to draw on. Observational humour's the big thing these days, after all. Um...

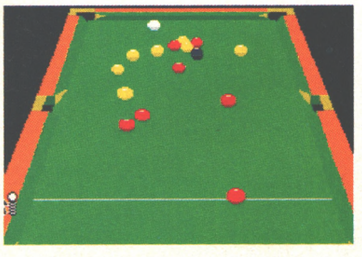
INSPIRATION STRIKES!

Americans, eh? Don't you just hate 'em? *(Oh no. – Ed)* Oh sure, it's all very nice to have someone to fly over to the Middle East at a moment's notice and defend oil prices – er, democracy. And in these post-Cold War days, who else are we going to get to shoot our soldiers when the Army needs a bit of pruning? And I don't know how we ever survived all those years without having our chocolate bars called great things like 'Snickers'. And what we'd have done without The Cosby Show to brighten our evenings and teach us good proper God-fearing morals I can't even begin to imagine. But basically, let's face it, they're crap. Why? Well, my granny always used to say that you can judge a nation by its sport, and I agree totally. Let's take a few examples.

Scotland: Football. The people's game. The most beautiful sport in the world. Enough said.

England: Cricket. Ludicrously over-complicated, unbelievably boring, goes on for days and days to no apparent purpose.





The 'trick' here is to whack the cue ball as full strength without hitting any other balls.

Australia: Australian Rules Football. A gigantic punch-up for lots of drunk bodybuilders in vests. With a ball.

Ireland: Hurling. Australian Rules Football with big sticks. Incredibly dangerous. Also features a ball, but it seems to be completely incidental to the proceedings.

Spain: Bullfighting. Ritualised torture and murder of unarmed dumb animals for no readily apparent reason. Probably something to do with General Franco, I should think.

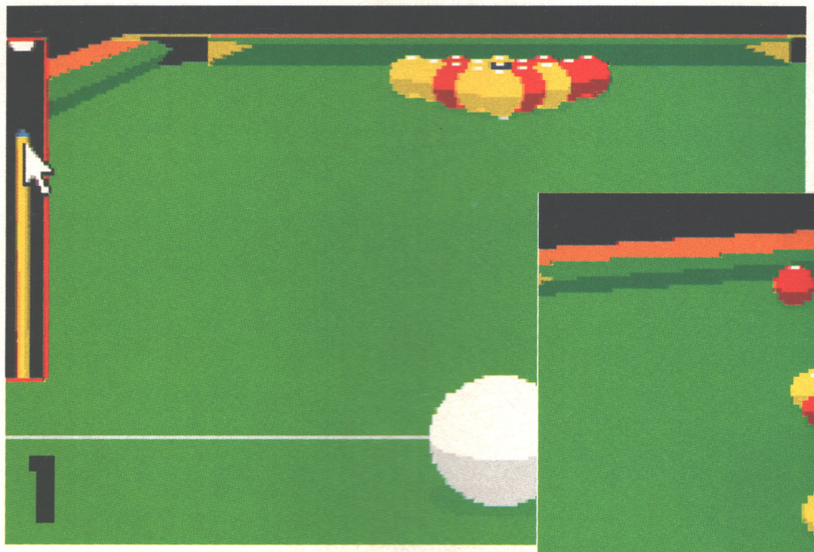
Germany: Invading Belgium *(I think that's quite enough national sports. – Ed)*

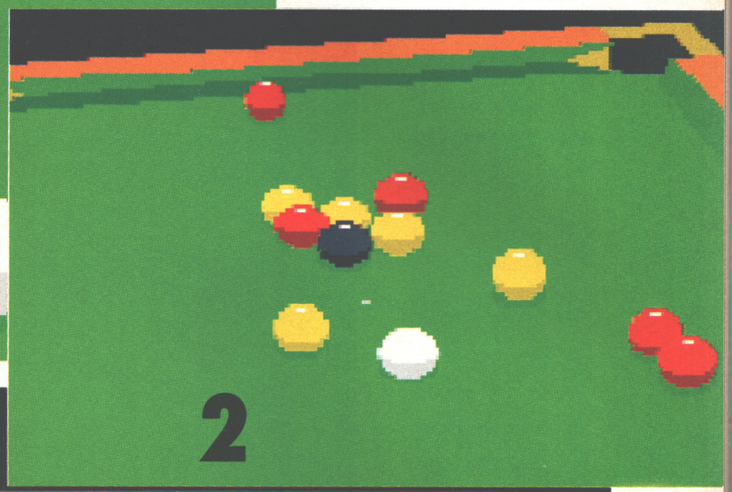
Now let's take a look at the Americans. Oddly, the Americans don't really have one particular national sport, but several. Let's have a look at a few.

First, there's American Football, a game where it's perfectly possible to have a 20-year career as a top player without ever touching a ball with your feet. Or indeed touching a ball at all. Basically, American Football is rugby for people who weren't actually skillful enough to play rugby. Then you've got baseball, ie a version of rounders with simplified rules for people who couldn't remember the proper ones. (Are you spotting the theme here yet, kids?) And as for wrestling...

And finally there's pool. Simple snooker. What's wrong, boys, I'd have thought snooker was the perfect game for you – lots of scope for ad breaks there...

Actually, I'm just kidding. I don't really hate Americans, or anybody else just because of where they were born. After all, Dr Johnson once said 'patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel'. Mind you, he was an Englishman, so what the bloody hell would he know about anything? But you've got to admit, they've got some pretty stupid ideas about sport. Which, in a sudden burst of relevance, brings us back to *Pool. (What do you mean, 'back'? – Ed)*





Archer Maclean's *Pool* – The Complete Playing Guide in three easy lessons. Fig.1 Start with a table arranged in a manner not at all unlike this...

Fig. 2 Now do lots of really clever ball-potting stuff, which will undoubtedly involve looking at tables like this rather a lot.
NB: You may need to get an adult to help you with this part.

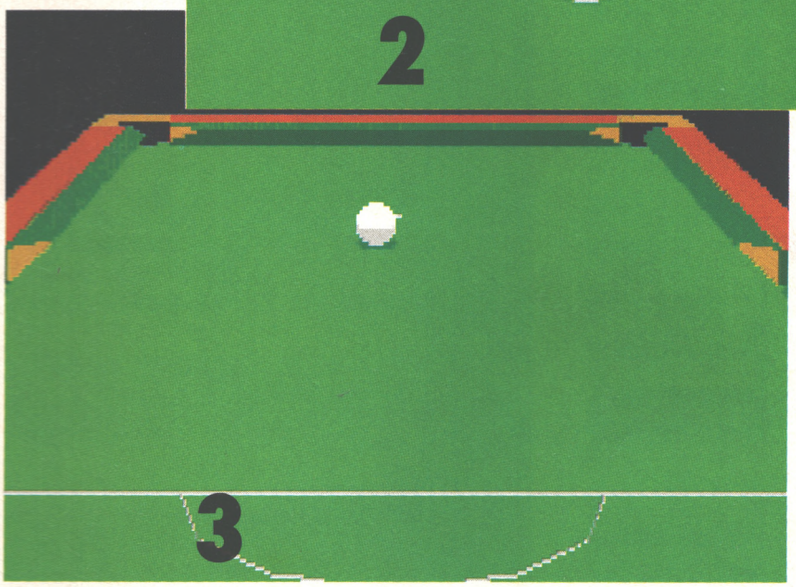


Fig. 3 End up with something looking a bit like this. Hey presto! You ARE Archer Maclean! Probably. Alternatively, you're playing one of the computer opponents...

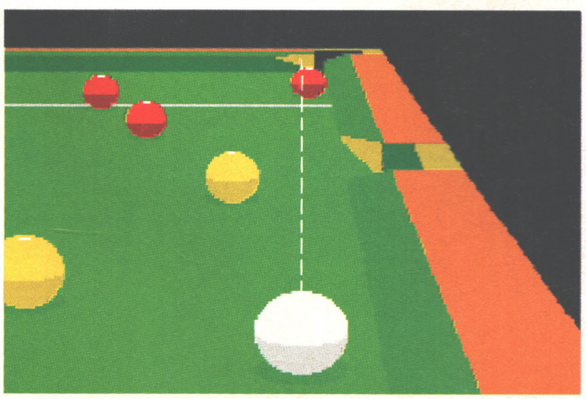
"Taken in isolation, this is a fabulous piece of software"

REVIEW STARTS HERE

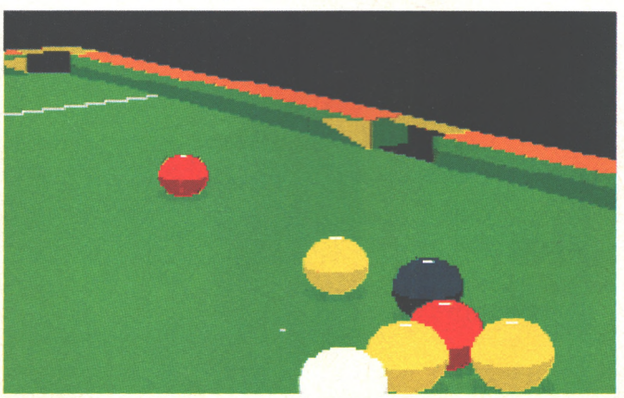
Now you're all sat there thinking 'Yeah yeah, but it's just exactly the same as *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker*, innit?' Well, sort of. I mean, there's no point in me sitting here brazenly trying to tell you it's a completely different kettle of chalk when it's patently obvious from the evidence in front of your eyes that it's not. You could probably make your own pool game simply by using *Snooker*'s trick shot editor to set up a pool-type ball formation (using reds for one colour and the colours for, er, the other colour) and then playing on from there. Of course, you'd have to ignore everything the computer said about foul shots and whose go it was and stuff, but it would (as far as I can see) actually work. So what have you got to gain by buying this instead?

Well, for a start, obviously, you'd be getting to play pool on a proper-sized table instead of something more like a football pitch, but there's a bit more to it than that. For a start, *Pool* gives you 20 opponents compared to *Snooker*'s four. Not only that, but the top players in *Pool* are a considerably more talented (and more interestingly-named) bunch than their *Snooker* counterparts – two-cushion rebounds and three-ball cannons are well within the capabilities of Cross Eyed Chris, Jimmy Brill, Alex Smartarse and the rest. Also, and perhaps most interestingly, you get three completely different kinds of game to play. Well, not completely different, they're still pool, but you can play UK bar rules pool, American 9-ball (a strange and fascinating game where the objective is simply to pot the 9 ball regardless of what else is on the table, but you always have to hit the lowest-numbered ball), and American 8-ball Pool which is essentially similar to the UK game but with a few tweaky little differences just to make it a bit more interesting. *(Someone hasn't done their research properly around here, and it isn't me. – Ed)*

Completing the line-up of differences is a little technical one – you now get tons of save slots on the game disk where

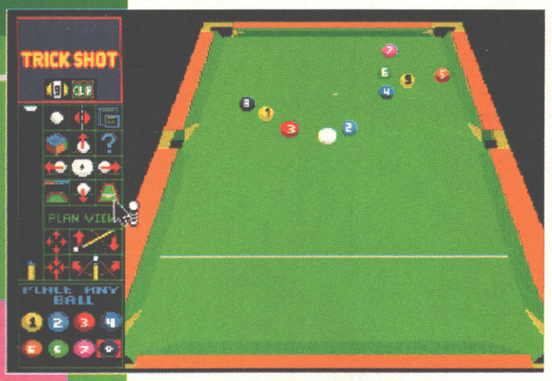


I bet you didn't know that the cue-chalking sound in *Pool* was actually made by rubbing two inflated balloons together. Well, now you do.



If you're not careful here, you're going to miss the cue ball altogether. All kinds of spin are catered for, except, inexplicably, Bolivian Nostril Spin.

As with *JWWS*, *Pool* lets you get right down on the baize for a cue's-eye view of the action. Of course, you can't really see anything useful, but it's nice anyway.



I hope there aren't many more pictures to go, I don't think I can keep this up very much longer.

Phew, made it! The last screenshot! One more caption and I've done it! Thank God! Y'know, I really didn't think I was going to make it then.

Snooker only had one.

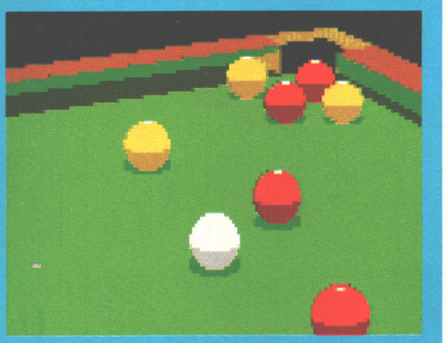
So all very fine and dandy then, but is it worth buying if you've already got *Whirlwind Snooker*? Don't be daft, guv'nor. There are very tangible and worthwhile differences, but be honest with yourself – how much use do you really have for 20 save game slots? And do you really WANT to be thrashed by a computer opponent which can flawlessly pull off the cleverest, most perfect snookers you can land on it, and then go on to clear the entire table in two shots? I certainly don't, mate. There are quite enough depressingly horrible things that you've got no control over going on in the world without paying out good money to get yourself all frustrated and annoyed over a computer game. Not that that stops it from being a great two-player game, of course, but when you're already paying out 26 quid for a game you shouldn't have to supply someone else to play it with if you want a decent difficulty curve as well. Even the worst of the computer opponents in *Pool* are disturbingly proficient at the game, and that's a little offputting.

Taken in isolation, this is a fabulous bit of software, but there's no escaping the fact that to all intents and purposes it already exists. If you're new to the Amiga, or so crap at knowing a good game when you see one that you don't have a copy of *Whirlwind Snooker*, then this is undoubtedly the better of the two to invest a few bob in (if only because *Pool* is essentially a better and more exciting game than *Snooker*), but for everyone else, and that has to be the vast majority, this is an unnecessary luxury, and there's precious few of us can afford those these days.

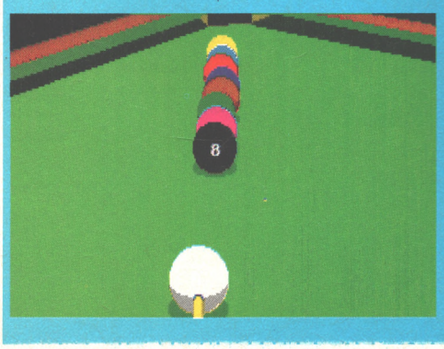
● *STUART CAMPBELL*

AND HERE ARE A FEW TRICK SHOTS I PREPARED EARLIER...

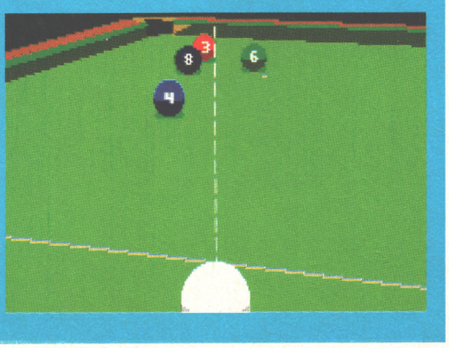
Left: Oh no, more pictures! Mmm. here we are in trick shot central, where it's possible to make things as hard as you want.



Right: Take this shot, for instance. It need a keen eye and Maths degree.



Left: Alternatively, why not pretend you're on a game show, and set up ludicrous shots like this?



Right: The aiming line comes in mighty handy, particularly over distances like this.

UPPERS The same beautiful game engine as before, but now tweaked, refined, improved and attached to a zappier game.

DOWNERS Well... it's still not exactly all that different, is it? And maybe it's just me being crap, but I can never seem to get the view of the table I really want (a nice simple overhead one where you can judge angles properly and see where everything's going), either. And the gliding striped balls are a bit crap.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Great stuff, but not for owners of *Whirlwind Snooker*. It's an obvious conclusion I know, but then so are the endings of the Shakespearean tragedies and nobody complains about them. So get off my case, okay?

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DOODL

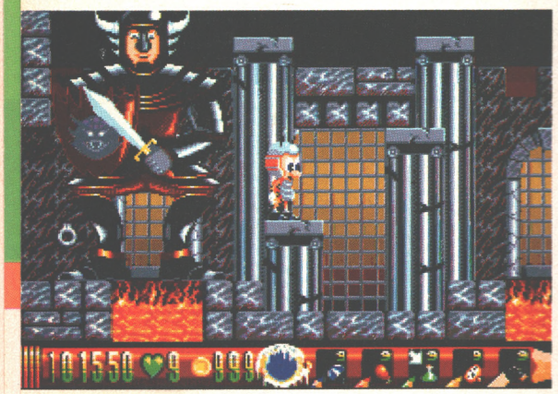
Cute platformers starring insects seem to be in vogue

Game: Doodlebug
Publisher: Core Design
Author: Adrian Cummings
Price: £25.99
Release: Out right now

Cute! Console-esque! Platforms! Quite good! Etc! Will that do? Thought not. One day they'll let me get away with that, y'know. One day they'll realise that there's really nothing to be said about this kind of game that you can't instantly work out for yourself simply by looking at the pictures on the pages and the percentage box at the end. It's a cutesy platform game, in that style that we jokingly refer to as 'console-esque' for no other reason than consoles are the flavour of the month and if we make something

at the moment. Here's the latest from Core.

Doodlebug tries out his Richard Branson impression – or is he being levitated by the spooky bald dude?



The third level is guarded by the Black Knight who bounces about in a most alarming manner.

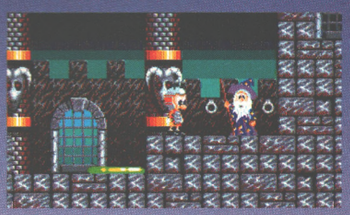
Our insectoid hero jumps for joy as he reaches the end of one of the stages of Toy World. Oh, and we'd prefer it if you didn't ask how we managed to get 999 time units and nine of everything else. Thanks.

ALL AROUND THE WORLDS, I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU

Although, as an insect, he should have three times as many feet as anyone else, Doodlebug still doesn't have to wear them out by walking everywhere. Not when there are all these handy vehicles to be used...

The forest level is populated by, amongst others, this cute little gnome dude...

...who'll quite happily sell you a powerful baddie-proof buggy to trundle around in.



The Creepy Castle's Arthur Daley is a wizard. Or is he just the gnome in a hat?

In Toy World, 10 gold pieces will secure this Yellow Submarine (altogether now...)

The ice world (I hate those) boasts... insert your 'chopper' gag here...

As with all the vehicles, inside the helicopter you're totally invulnerable.

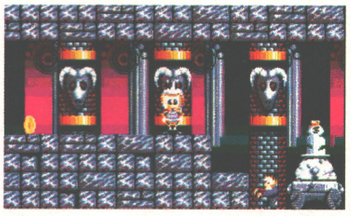
Is there intelligent life on Earth, or is this alien only visiting?

LEBUG

Doodlebug gets in some training for the later worlds. Yes, I know, I'm fired.

Luckily, Doodlebug comes equipped with an automatic aqualung

Aw, come oan, Doodlebug, screw the nut, eh? (That's a Scottish joke, by the way.)



The game comes with an 'ST mode' cheat, which switches off the pretty backdrops.

sound like it could have come from Nintendo or Sega, you lot are much more likely to actually go out and buy it. The fact that 90% of real console games are actually crappy beat-'em-ups or scrolling blasters goes conveniently un-noticed. Truth of the matter is, games like this are about as 'computer-esque' as it's possible to get – from *Miner 2049*er back in 1873 or whenever it was, platform-leaping has been the staple diet of the computer gamer. These days, if you're an 8-bit computer owner, it's practically impossible to buy anything else. Maybe we should just call this sort of game 'Spectrum-esque', hmm?

The bold bug and his brolly – wave goodbye to death-plunge misery.

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE RANCH

But (as usual), I'm getting away from the point. I suppose you want me to talk about *Doodlebug* now. *(Yes, please. – Ed)*

Doodlebug is subtitled *Bug Bash II*, which for those of you with short memories refers to a game reviewed in our PD column way back in issue six (three stars, if you're interested). It's got next to nothing in common with that game, though, as *Bug Bash* was a simplistic and pretty dull scrolling shoot-'em-up, so forget I mentioned it. Or just try not to think about it. Actually, come to think about it, there was something I was wondering about the name. How much is there to be gained from associating what you're trying to push as a big, bright, sexy, 'console-esque' platform game with a frankly not much cop PD shoot-'em-up from about two years ago? (*Bug Bash* was a £15 'budget' game before it became a sort of PD thing, y'see.) It doesn't seem like particularly smart marketing to me. Then again, what would I know about it? But I'm digressing again.

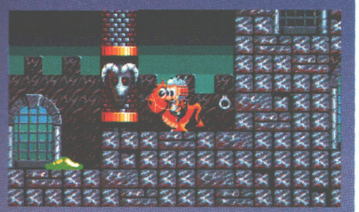
The game is made up of five levels, each with three sub-levels and a big boss screen. The graphics, as befits a game allegedly set in the kingdom of Cartoonia, are cartoony and colourful and all that sort of stuff, and depict the usual kinds of worlds that are found in this kind of game – forests, icy wastes, creepy castles and so on. There's some rather nice parallax scrolling, lots of cutesy sprites, and plenty of incidental stuff that you can see for yourself in the screenshots. Soundwise we're also in familiar territory, with bouncy little nursery-rhyme tunes and twinkly effects, and it's all very pleasant.

"The difficulty is just about right for most players"

In the gameplay department, though, there's a distinct suggestion of some new stuff. While the majority of the game is spent running around picking up treasures and killing baddies by jumping on their heads, *Doodlebug* has a novel theme at its centre. By selecting one of five icons along the bottom of the screen (by the convenient method of simply pulling down on the joystick to cycle through the list), the game's eponymous hero can throw out one of five different colours of magic pencil (assuming he's collected some, that is). The pencils will kill baddies if they hit them, but more importantly, if their flightpath is uninterrupted they'll swiftly draw one of four useful devices that Doodlebug can use to help him on his quest. An umbrella saves him from death by long fall (yes, after a long absence the Platform Game Where You Can Die By Falling A Long Way is back in vogue), a balloon gives him a quick lift past some tricky obstacle or other, a magic potion renders him completely invulnerable and a clock stops the time limit from counting down for a while. The fifth pencil (not actually a pencil at all, but an eraser) fulfils a smart-bomb function. What these little doobries do is not so much make your life easier (it's possible, as far as I can tell, to complete the game without using any of them) but add a neat extra element to the gameplay which gives you a bit more to think about than where the next baddie to jump on's coming from. It's a double-edged sword, of course – they also tempt you to venture into dangerous places where you'd otherwise not go in search of that useful extra smart bomb – but then that's part of the appeal of all great games, the balance between risk and reward, the gambling on your own skills.

So there you go. Everything you need to know about Doodlebug that you hadn't already ascertained for yourself from playing the demo that's impossibly handily sellotaped to the front of this very magazine. Except, maybe, that while later levels do get nastier (more baddies, needing more hits to kill and so on), they never really get viciously nasty or horrendously long, so if you're a real gaming hero you might get through this a bit quicker than you'd expect. That said, I reckon the difficulty is going to prove just about right for most average players, so if that sounds like you and you're a bit fed up of games that you never get to see the end of, this might be just what you've always been waiting for. It's certainly enough fun to make it worth trying.

● *STUART CAMPBELL*



Whichever, he'll still rent you this not-especially-useful dragon.

Who cares? He's prepared to sell his UFO to you, that's the main thing.

UPPERS It's cute, it's playable, and the control system works a lot better than you might expect it to. The pencil power-up concept is really sweet, too, and there are lots of nice touches, like the various vehicles you can buy from other characters to aid your progress.

DOWNERS It's possibly going to be a bit on the short side for dedicated platform fanatics, and the loading gaps between major levels are pretty massive. Dying when you fall a long(ish) way seems ridiculously out-of-date these days. Oh yeah, and I HATE slippy-slidey inertia-heavy 'ice-world' levels – they're not big or hard or clever, they're really obvious and lazy and I'm completely sick of them. There, I've said it.

THE BOTTOM LINE

It's not really up there with *Zool* and *The Addams Family*, but it's not that far behind either. It reminds me of *Fire And Ice*, and it's good fun in a not-at-all-dissimilar sort of way.

83 PERCENT

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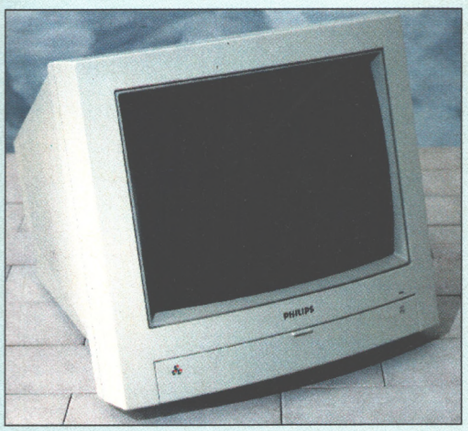

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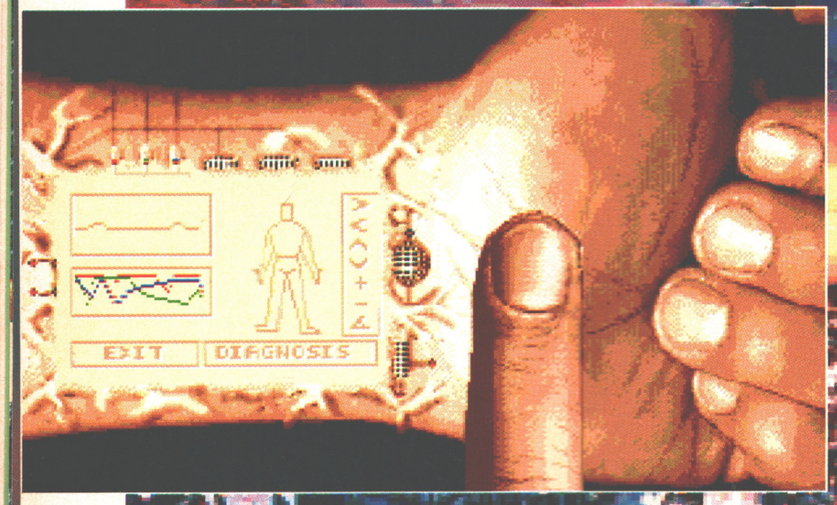
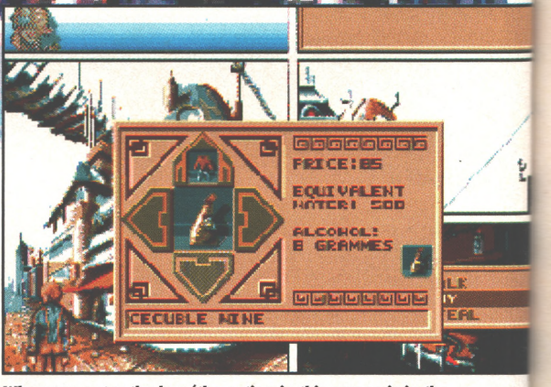
BAT II



The Biodirectional Organic Bioputer (BOB) is exactly the sort of gadget James Bond will have in 22nd century. It monitors your agent and his immediate surroundings. BOB's main feature is a programming module which is terribly complicated, but you don't have to use it if you don't want to. Still, it's nice to know it's there.



When you enter the bar (the action in this screen is in the bottom right corner) the quest for realism extends to your being able to buy booze and drink yourself unconscious.

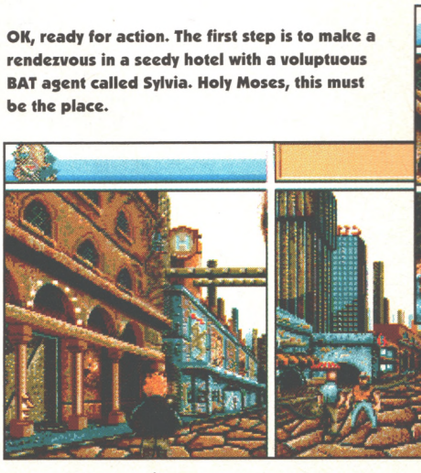
If you're after an ambitious sci-fi adventure kind of affair, then you've come to the right place.

Game: BAT II
Publisher: Ubi Soft
Price: £30.99
Authors: Computer Dreams
Release: Out now

Here's a weird one. A vast science fiction RPG-cum-adventure game that has built-in flight simulators, a pseudo racing game, an *Arkanoid* clone, a little puzzle game and even a spot of Chinese checkers. The more technically minded among you, can even get a spot of programming done during the game as well. Well, I did say it was weird. But is it any good?

Seven games in one, eh? Hmmm. How does it all fit together? Better make sure the glue's pretty good or the whole thing's going to fall apart at the seams and you'll be left with a misshapen blob on your screen. Thankfully, the glue in *BAT II* is damn good stuff, because not only does it hold all the bits together, it creates one of the most involving adventure-gaming experiences you're ever likely to come across.

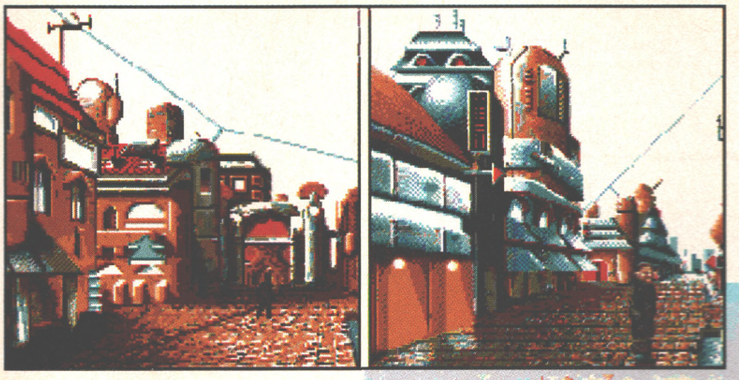
Despite the fantastic futuristic plot – something along the lines of a company having a monopoly of a substance called Echiatone 2, the king being a robot and you having to sort out the mess – the game is remarkably easy to believe in. Computer Dreams have gone to great lengths to create a complete



OK, ready for action. The first step is to make a rendezvous in a seedy hotel with a voluptuous BAT agent called Sylvia. Holy Moses, this must be the place.

Wander through the hotel's room and the screen divides into quarters. It's odd, but it works well once you get used to it – usually after a couple of hours.

And here's Sylvia with some unhelpful directions. Click on the red words to get more information, but don't expect too much. Time to take the via express.



Get ready for the experience of a lifetime. If you didn't know, BAT stands for Bureau of Astrological Troubleshooters.

game world and it's surprising how quickly it begins to absorb you. Yes, you know it's in the 22nd century, when people can travel through black holes and do other absurdly unbelievable things, but the day-to-day life in Roma II is so involving that you believe that's how things will be 200 years from now.

IT'S CHARACTER BUILDING

All RPGs seem to start with character creation, and *BAT II* is no exception. It consists of adjusting pretty standard RPG statistics, including strength, charisma, vitality and intelligence. But as with most parts of the game there's a neat twist – you can define your desired combination of characteristics and use an in-game computer to trawl through the available agents to find your perfect match.

The first impression you get when you start the adventure proper is that you don't know what the hell's going on. Walk up a street and the screen splits in two. Go in a building and the screen divides into three. For the first couple of hours it's nigh-on impossible to tell where the Sam Hill you are, and where you'll be when move off the screen. The manual waffles on gaily about the Dynorama system, which enables 'images to come and go at will'. In theory it's a really good idea, but in practice it can often be downright confusing.

When you get used to the system, though, it does have many benefits. Because many locations only fill a quarter of the screen, they take up less disk space, and as a result you get more places to visit. It's also quicker to skip between four quarter-screen locations than to load four full-screen versions. See? It all makes some sort of sense in the long run, you've just got to be patient.

The sound effects, often an afterthought in many RPGs, add immensely to the game's atmosphere. Stand in the street and you can hear spaceships taking off and landing, wander over to the arcade and you hear suitable pinging and whizzing noises. Step inside and they get louder. It seems like a small point, but it really does make it easier to believe that you're wandering around a real city – play the game without the effects and you lose half the atmosphere.

Put your foot down and race past those dullards. Watch out for the cops, they're only too pleased to hand out hefty fines.

The sub-games also add to the realistic effect. The simulators are used to travel from one place to another – you can go on autopilot if you want – and you can gamble on the arcade games to win badly-needed extra cash. With all these extras, the game world seems so much more complete. You find yourself living a virtual life in the form of your *BAT II* agent. After all, he has to eat, drink and sleep (he can even be merry if you want, but that's another story), which means you have to frequent the shops, bars and nightclubs, and find places to spend the nights.

"Adventure is ultimately what *BATII* is all about"

As the game progresses you have to recruit new people to your cause. You can even send them on special assignments to help you along the way. But not everyone's friendly and you'll inevitably meet people who'd rather give you a good slap than give you the time of day. As with most sub-games in *BAT II*, you've got two choices on how to play the combat.

BAT II, BRUTE?

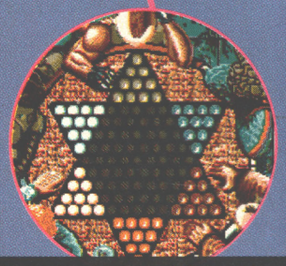
The strategy option shows a display of the combatants' characteristics and a text read-out gives you a progress report on the state of the battle. All you have to do is make sure your guy has the right armour and weapons. It's not thrilling by any stretch of the imagination, but it serves a purpose and gets you through the combat as quickly as possible. Much more exciting is the action option, which gives you control of your agent's weapon and you have to blast away at the shadowy figures dashing across the screen – a sort of high-class *Operation Wolf*. More fun than strategy, and it also gives you a break from the serious business of adventuring.

But the adventure is ultimately what *BAT II* is all about. The sub-sections do provide distractions, but they're all integral parts of the plot and add immensely to the game's realism. If you like games in which you can make rapid progress in a short space of time, steer clear of *BAT II*. It certainly isn't a game to be taken lightly. You've got to take your time with it, become immersed in the futuristic world, absorb the game's atmosphere, and get to grips with the numerous game elements.

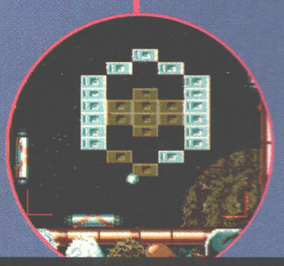
It's tough going at the start, but ultimately it's a very rewarding game to play. And anyway, a game that includes Philp K Dick and Jimi Hendrix on its credits list can't be all bad.

● *RICHARD LONGHURST*

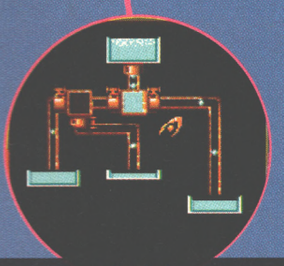
RAISING CASH DOWN THE ARCADE



In the left-hand corner of the arcade you can play a rather tedious game of Chinese checkers. You should really only choose this one if you fancy a kip.



The best game is Quattro, a four-sided *Arkanoids* clone complete with power-ups. Play on here for hours, or until you lose all your money.



Tubular, a peculiar little puzzle game. You have to open and close taps to make each bucket contain the same amount of water. Very odd.

UPPERS A large number of locations and a wide variety of game elements creates an involving atmosphere. The adventure's that much more entertaining because it's easy to believe in the game world, and lose yourself in its intricacies. Enthralling plot adds to the excitement.

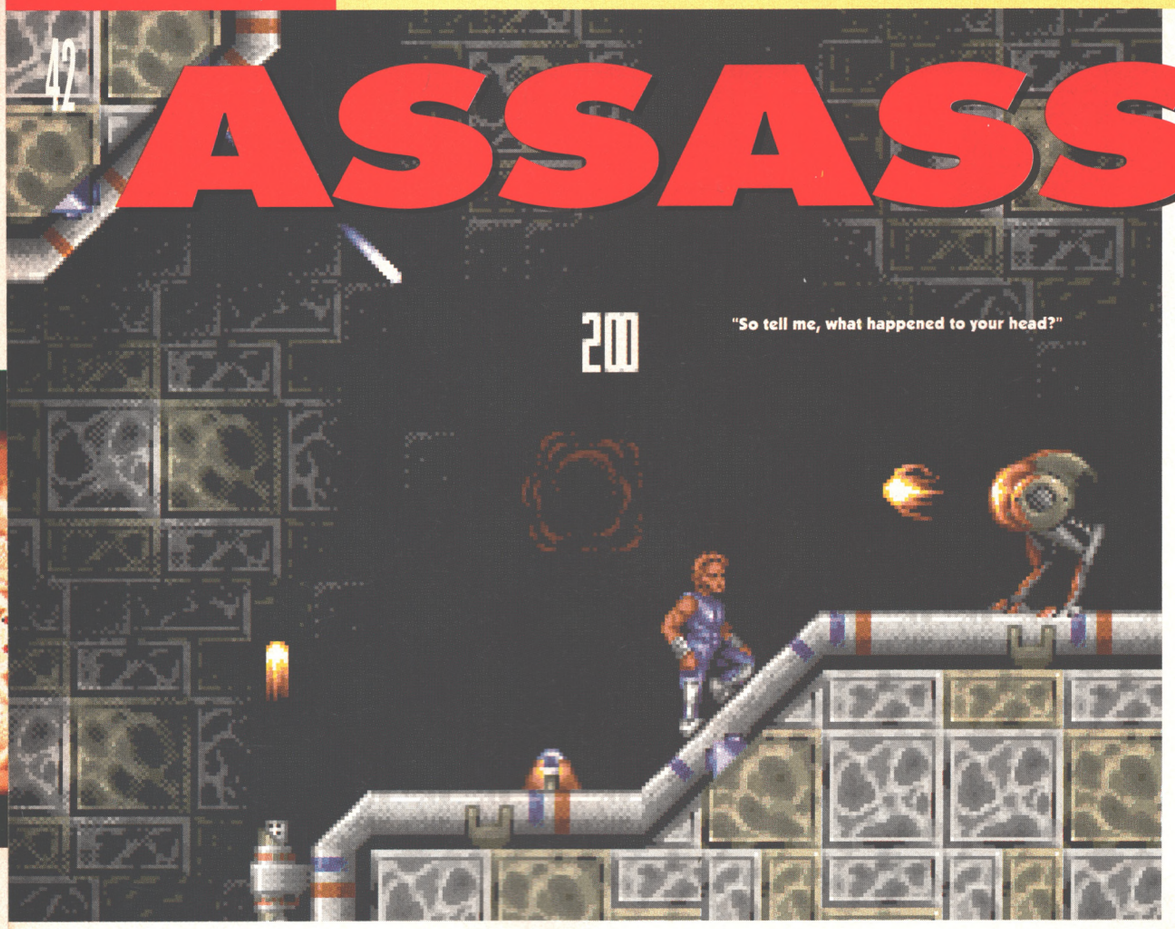
DOWNERS A really tough adventure to get into, and it's not helped by the split-screen layout, which is very confusing at the start. Conversations can sometimes be frustratingly useless.

THE BOTTOM LINE

BATII draws on so many different styles that it could have turned into a molten mess of incoherent gameplay. But the combat and simulator sections work well, and the exciting adventure is heavily backed up with RPG-style elements. It's an unusual hybrid, but it works, and there's plenty of excitement to be had.

80 PERCENT

ASSASSIN



Had enough of all that daft ninja stuff? Fed up with all those commando daggers? Then why not use a boomerang?

Game: Assassin
Publisher: Team 17
Price: £25.99
Authors: Dave Broadhurst (Code) Haydn Dalton (Graphics) Mike and Andrew Oakley (additional artwork)
Release: Out now

There are many good fighters, but few top-ranking contenders. Many fall broken, battered and bruised by the wayside in their attempt to get to the top. But a small number do make it to the world arena – some through the amateur ranks, others on the streets, brawling and prizefighting. If you were to ask a member of the boxing fraternity about such fighters, they might well tell you of Sugar Ray Robinson and Marvin Hagler, both World Middleweight Champions during the 1980s. Both were in a class of their own, but at the top there was only room for one.

"An unrelenting flow of evil in all shapes and sizes"

In the world of Amiga console-esque fight-'em-ups many, too, have come and gone. Some reach the Amiga from the sweat and bustle of the arcades, while others have been created solely for this, the most uncompromising of game machines. Like Hagler and Sugar Ray, they all have one goal – to be the best. *Leander* and *First Samurai* were both 'able' contenders in the highly competitive field of wannabe Mega Drive games.

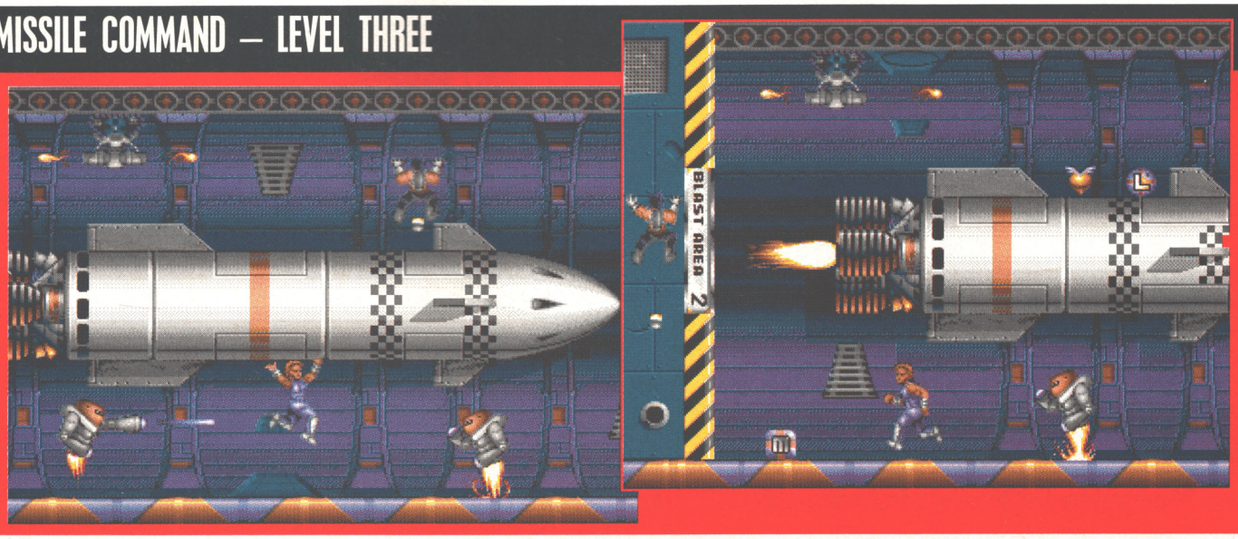
To survive such fierce competition, a game must have something special. *Assassin*'s creators, Broadhurst and Dalton, brought you *Dojo Dan*, so they know the genre well. Team 17, publishers, see *Assassin* as their 'best creation to date'. But is that, in itself, good enough?

Assassin does have all the standard features of its genre – colourful, energetic graphics, multiple scrolling, lots of collectables and an end-of-game baddie. And for inspiration, just for a change, we're not in a world of ninjas and samurai – *Assassin* looks to the Aborigines of Australia in several ways, not least the choice of an armoured boomerang as weaponry. *(But don't ask what the others are. – Ed)*

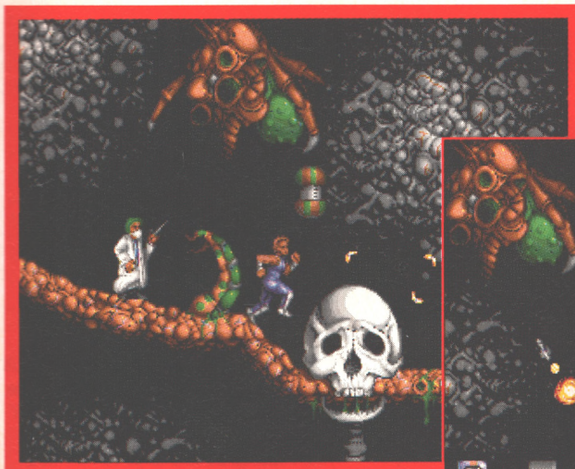
You are the assassin, living in a land torn apart by the abuse of the evil tyrant, Midan. He hides deep underground in a highly complex lair system. World security demands that his evil reign be ended. One man is needed to enter the lair and destroy him. A highly versatile and athletic hit man, you're dropped behind enemy lines. You must now end the reign and survive to tell the tale.

The game is made up of five different levels, with an unrelenting flow of baddies and evil in all shapes and sizes. Your adversaries vary from snipers and mad construction welders to killer robots and pit bull terriers. The pit bulls introduce

MISSILE COMMAND – LEVEL THREE



In Missile Command you must reach the launch computer that holds all the codes. While you're running in between rockets watch out for nasty little creeps hanging from above. They produce killer fire from their backs.

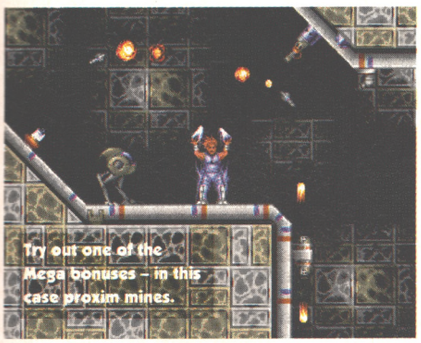


How low can you go? Down in the sewers you'll find some hidden bonuses. You might even have to use your soul for a mega fireball.

Just listen to the squelch as you run over the mutant flesh. It's a mad mutant doctor. Don't let him get you and watch out for those green chimps.

There are lots of bonuses to collect, wherever you are. If you get lost, just look out for a little man to show you the way.!

THE GENETIC ASYLUM – AVOID THE CHIMPS AND DESTROY MIDAN'S MUTANT BABY.



Try out one of the Mega bonuses – in this case proxim mines.

themselves at the beginning. They're bound to bring a tear to your eye as they use the elements of surprise and terror – you never know when or where they're going to attack you. It's almost as bad as the real thing, but you'll be damn glad it isn't when you see where they grab you. Blood spurts out between their vicious jaws and it takes some shaking to get them off. For an enemy to be so convincing and terrifying in any game is some achievement. I defy anyone to be attacked by these vicious creatures and not cringe!

The strength of your enemy will depend on the skill level you've chosen, which you'll find among the endless options at the start of the game. Each of the three skill levels, Rookie, Arcade and Ultimate, are designed for different player abilities. In Rookie level you can only see the first two levels, but this enables you to get used to the game structure within the confines of an easier time limit.

In Arcade mode you begin with three lives by default and play the complete game. Ultimate provides the toughest mode, rewarding you with the highest bonuses and strongest enemies.

Coming back to that Antipodean factor there's also a Boomerang selection mode, offering manual or automatic options. In manual mode you can select the effect of any boomerang power-up by firing at it with your boomerang. You'll →

ALWAYS TAKE THE WEAPONS WITH YOU!

Square 'Mega weapon' power-up capsules are very useful, not only are they very destructive, but they produce some impressive visual effects too.

With this you have the power to use the Robo–Walker mega-weapon. Two small robotic walkers are despatched damaging the first enemy in their path.

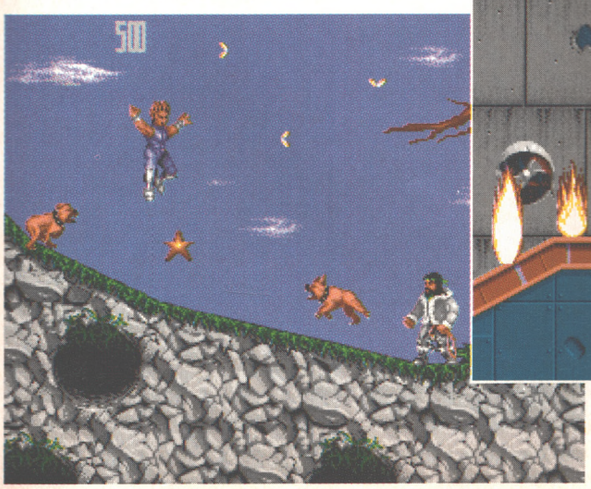
Enables you to use a set of Proxim-Mines. These cause heavy damage to un-armoured enemies.

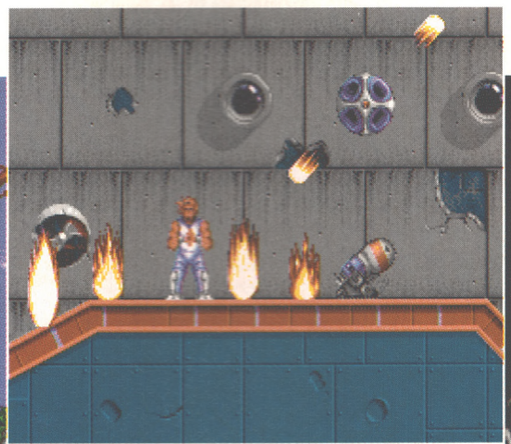
Gives you the ability to use the Heat-Seeking Missiles. Three are sent forth to destroy as much as possible.

This means you can activate the Flame-Storm mega-weapon. Huge bolts of fire leap from your soul (Yikes! – Ed), destroying all nearby enemies.

This enables you to use the Flame-Path mega -weapon. A wall of fire which spreads outwards.

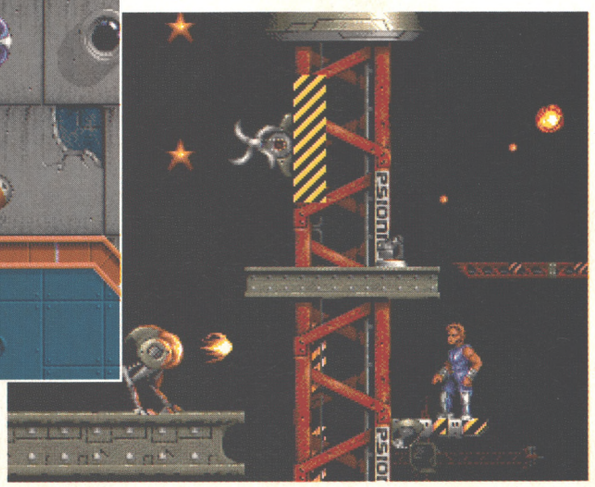
This is the first level, 'The Landing'. Watch out for the crusty hippies from hell and their Pitbulls.





I have only one burning desire – let me stand next to your fire.

Here in the Construction Zone you'll find that R2D2 isn't half as friendly as in Star Wars.



MY BOOMERANG WON'T COME BACK.

Boomerang power-up capsules. These are round and can be powered up more than once. Here's how you recognise them.

W This makes your boomerangs move in a wider arc when thrown.

E Gives your boomerang the power of multiplying to five.

P This increases the actual power of the boomerang – the weapon will take on a different graphical form.

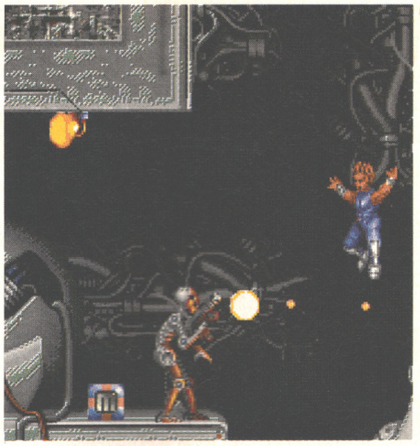
S Boomerang speed is increased and the effect is thus improved.

L This will increase the distance your boomerangs are thrown.

earn such a power-up by destroying an enemy and collecting the round capsule that remains. To change the effect of the power up capsule, you simply shoot it. Alternatively, in automatic mode it's impossible to change effects, but this does make a much faster game.

Even at the beginning of this game, then, you'll find that its variety and scope seem limitless. Another source of variety is the choice of lives on commencing the game – one, three or five. Greater bonuses are given for starting with one life, less for three and none if you start with five.

Assassin's energy system is very sensitive – you'll find that an uncontrolled fall will drain your energy just as much as a bad hit from enemy weaponry. Just as enemy strength varies, so too does the amount of boomerang power needed to kill them. Much destruction can be wreaked with your boomerang, but different enemies will require more hits than others, and in some cases a very precise strike will be needed to secure a kill.



Midan's metallic labyrinth is the final section of the game – and as you might expect it's the hardest.

Your aim is to get as far into the base as you can. You'll begin after being dropped by helicopter in the woods. Fighting your way through the woods, you'll eventually reach a dome shaped building – the entrance to the lift shaft, level two. Make your way down the lift shaft to the construction zone. Here you must deactivate the crane to get into the third level, missile command. After reaching the launch computer enter into a mutation of flesh and evil doctors. If you manage to overcome the green putrid poisons and legless vomiting chimps, you're nearly there, but level five is no straightforward affair. Quite the opposite, it's Midan's labyrinth, and here you'll be treated to some Terminator-like beasts and weird chanting. Finally you'll get to meet Midan himself – you'll be both shocked and surprised, I promise. *Assassin* is nothing if not unpredictable.

As if the enemies and obstacles of each level weren't enough, there's a time limit too. Once a time limit is reached your assassin will really need a guardian angel watching over him, as reinforcements and stronger enemies attack him.

Like any good console style fight-'em-up, *Assassin* offers you a wide variety of power-ups and collectables. Stars are just one example – there are loads to collect on every level. Get 99 and you'll be rewarded with a bonus life. There's so much to do in this game – at times it all seems too much.

Each level is packed with a variety of bonuses, and with so much going on it's possible to miss almost all of them (if you really try). You must search for these hidden extras. As you progress, power ups and collectables will enable you to gain more agile boomerangs, but that's not all. You'll score points bonuses, time bonuses and ultimately you'll build up special 'Mega-weapons'. You'll find these in the form of capsules in secret locations, which appear after you've destroyed a seriously BAD enemy. You can also find 'continue' bonuses, which enable you to continue the game from where you finished previously.

So that probably gives you some idea of the game's complex, but endlessly playable structure. Now you're probably wondering how the whole thing handles. My answer to that is simple – sweet as a nut (whatever that means). Everything is joystick operated, but within three modes.

Firstly without the fire button pressed down you control the assassin's movement around the scenery. He will interact with all scenery grabbing hold of anything to climb or swing from. It's this climbing and swinging action that will bring comparisons with *Strider* and *First Samurai*, but that's all there is to compare.

The movement is both smooth and powerful and the effort needed to control and activate the character's movements is minimal. General handling and controllability is very impressive – by pushing the joystick diagonally when your character hangs by his arms, a somersault can be performed resulting in a leap to the edge above. Holding the fire button down activates the boomerang in the direction you're facing. Boomerangs can be fired standing, crouching or hanging. If you've collected any of the pods press and hold the joystick button to access the impressive 'Mega weapons'. Look at the bottom of the screen to see which weapon is highlighted. Precise detonation can be achieved by holding the joystick up – this pauses the detonation. The handling and control are possibly the most satisfying aspects of *Assassin*.

"More than anything else, it's sheer size will hit you"

With so much in there, it's impossible to cover it all, but the artwork and animation can't go unmentioned. Wild, innovative, brash and sometimes crude, they shock, impress and blend perfectly with Allister Brimble's sound effects. It all comes together to give *Assassin* a wonderfully tense atmosphere.

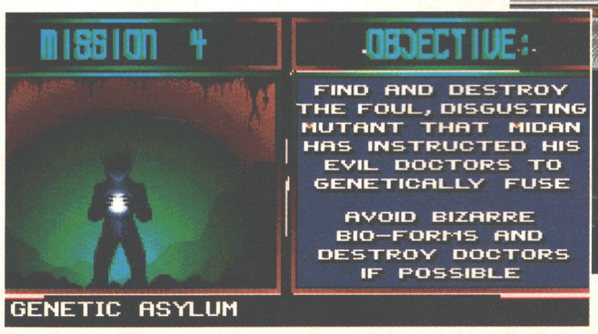
More than anything else, its sheer size and unpredictability will hit you. You never know what's going to get you next or where it's going to come from. *Assassin* performs with the arrogance and showmanship of Sugar Ray, but packs a punch like Marvelous Marvin. It's perhaps not as tight as, say *First Samurai*. But this is Team 17's finest moment yet.

● *MATTHEW SQUIRES*

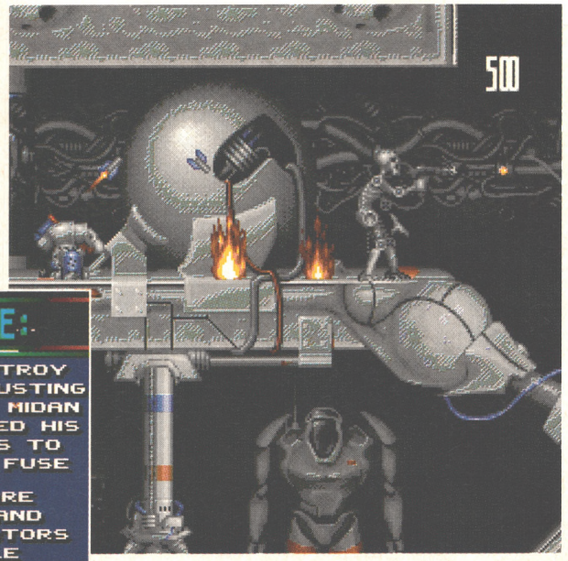
ON THE OTHER HAND

***Assassin* is just an updated version of *Turrican* and *Strider*. The levels seem to be just too big. They could be scaled down quite easily and still manage tokeep that arcadey feel. The style of play seems to be a little dated, so I'd have to say that it's good, but, not that good. I would knock the mark down into the mid to high 70s. It just doesn't feel as good as *Switchblade 2*, and that's two years old now.**

● *LES ELLIS*



At the beginning of each level an intro screen will tell you your objective and where you're going.



This skeleton nasty brings to mind Terminator, but apart from that the game brims with originality.

UPPERS Beautiful handling, effortless controllability, limitless scope and variety, stunning animation, brash artwork...I could go on forever.

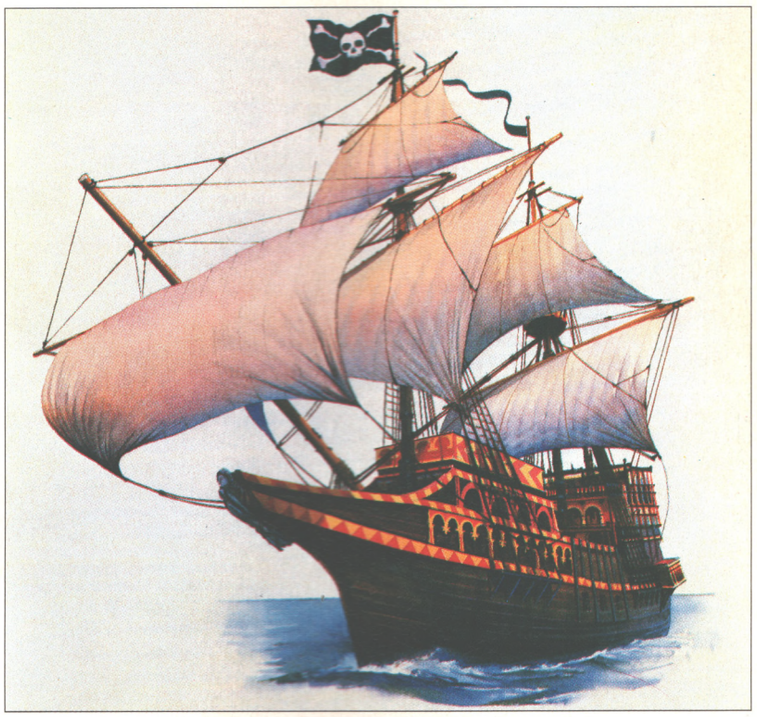
DOWNERS Well if I really have to find something wrong with this game.....er yes, I know ...there's too many options and vegetarians might find the pit bull blood-spurting sequences a bit disturbing.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Here, I reckon, you have a game that's not far off perfect. This is a contender with class – the trouble is that when a game reaches this kind of standard it has no competition. *Assassin* has effortlessly climbed and somersaulted to the top of the heap.

89 PERCENT

Tonight you could become a Railroad Tycoon, shape a Civilization or indulge in a little Piracy in the Caribbean



Alternatively, you could grab an early night

With such voyages of fantasy at your fingertips, there's no reason to have a 'quiet night in' ever again. Devised by the guru of games design, Sid Meier, each adventure involves strategic role playing to stretch your imagination and sharpen your wits.

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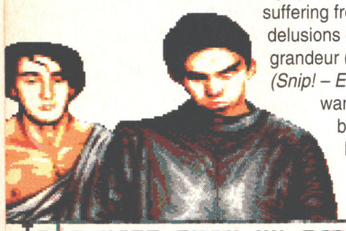
Game: Rome AD92: Pathway To Power
Publisher: Millennium
Authors: Vectordean, Andi Smithers and Alan McCarthy
Price: £25.99
Release: November

ROME

If you started as a slave in AD78, do you think you could take the place of the Emperor Domitian?

From what I've heard life as a leader of the mighty Roman empire was a good way short of perfect. Let's face it, all they did all day was plunder and pillage and then spend the night relaxing by the pool with wine, women and,er, some more wine and women. The only shortcoming in this ideal career was that they did tend to suffer from the habit of getting bumped off by disgruntled citizens every time something went wrong. Even though it was rather short-lived, it was still a position that just about everyone wanted. Even the slaves fancied a bash, and that's where you come in.

You are (or rather, the character you control is, seeing as you weren't actually around when the Romans were kicking some serious European butt), Hector. Hector is the lowest of the low. His nickname is Doormat because everyone walks all over him, in fact he's even lower than a Staff Writer on AMIGA POWER. *(And don't you forget it. - Ed)* This guy has been a slave all his life (also like a Staff Writer on AMIGA POWER, strangely enough) but is suffering from delusions of grandeur (just like...) *(Snip! – Ed.)* Hector wants to become the Emperor of Rome. A nice dream maybe, but this guy is serious and he'll need more than a little luck.

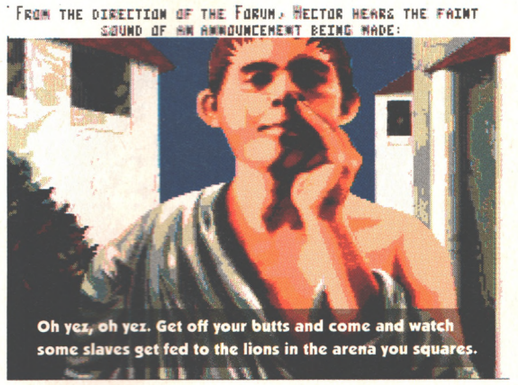


The general idea is that you complete six quests which represent the transition from low-life scumbag slave to regal Emperor. To give you a general idea, at the start you're based in Herculaneum which just happens to be situated under a certain volcano that's abut to erupt. You have to escape from here and go to Rome, save the Emperor from assassination, lead an army, conquer the world and become Emperor yourself. From imminent death in chains to ruler of most of the civilised world, eh? No problem...

Before we go any further I would like to commend Millennium on a completely new, revolutionary idea. Interesting and funny manuals for their adventures! What a crazy idea, it just might work. It was a most entertaining read. Unfortunately, it's a lot more entertaining than the game.

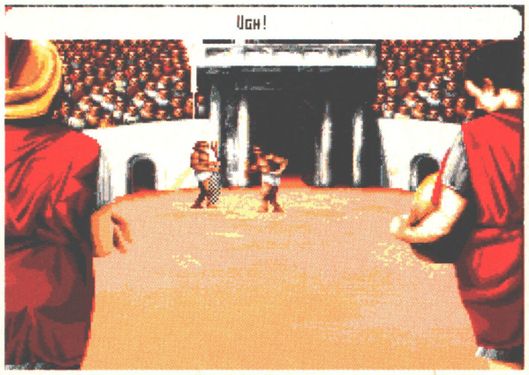
Taking a look at these screenshots you could be forgiven for thinking this is just a reworking of *Robin Hood*, the other Millennium game that used this graphics system. Well if it works once why not use it again, y'know? Of course, this means we have to put up with microscopic characters and jerky screen movement. But the strength of games like this lies in the gameplay, or so I've been told. Saying that, not all the graphics are bad. The buildings on screen can be quite ornately detailed at times, especially when you start reaching the higher levels, and there are loads of static screens that appear when something major happens, like an announcement in Rome or when you finish a level, or more importantly when you die (which will happen a lot at the start).

What adventures are all about, of course, is exploring. You can take your



Oh yez, oh yez. Get off your butts and come and watch some slaves get fed to the lions in the arena you squares.

Oh no he hasn't. Oh yes he has. Oh no he.... that's enough of that. A bit of gratuitous theft is the order of the day.

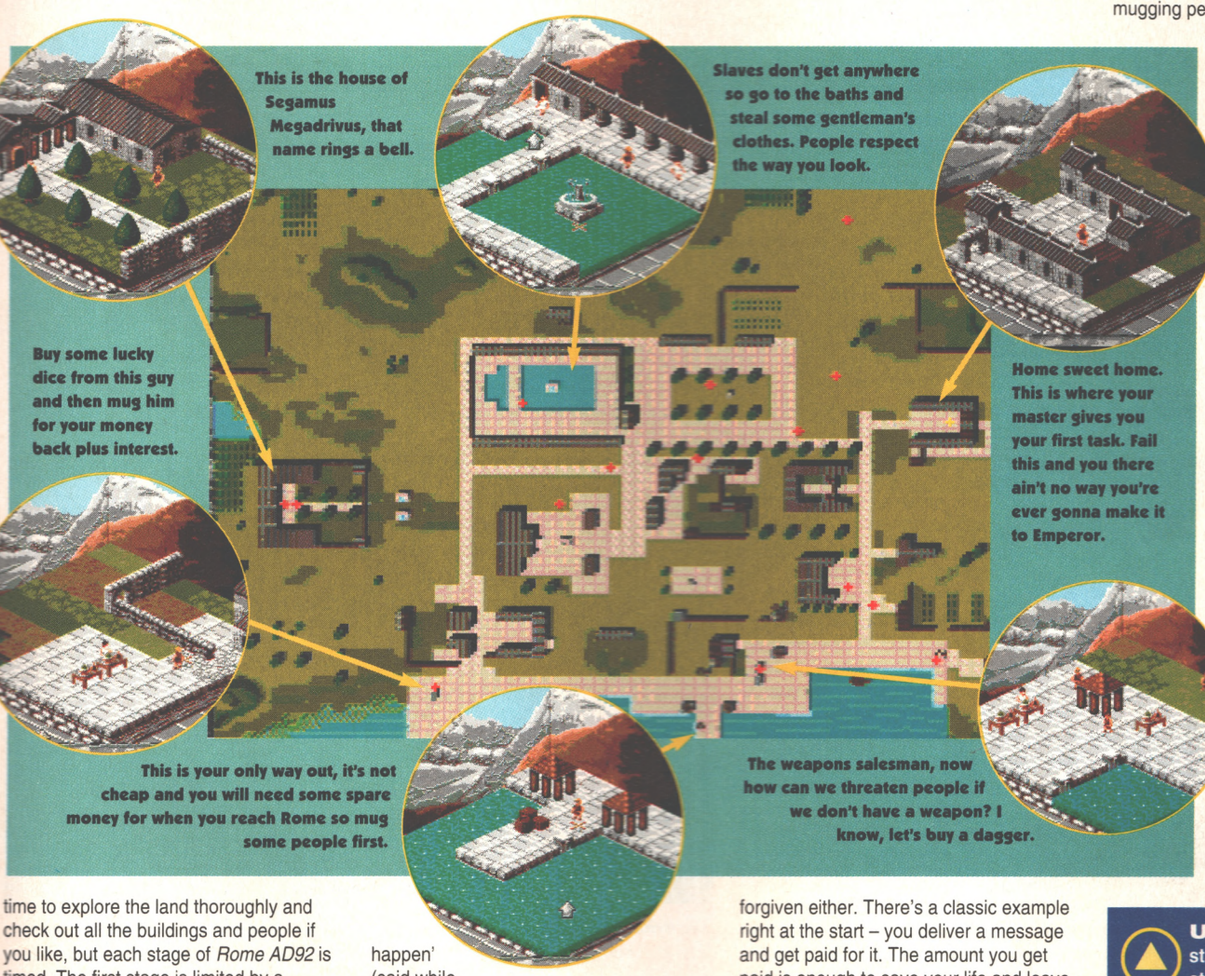


Pssst, see those two over there. I heard a rumour that they have silly names like Incontinentia Buttocks and Naughtius Maximus.

Talk is cheap and so are these guards by the looks of it. So much for morals and incorruptibility, just bribe 'em.

Who you calling blondie? Just for that I'm going to use my lucky dice and win all your money and buy a slave to beat up yours.

AD92



time to explore the land thoroughly and check out all the buildings and people if you like, but each stage of *Rome AD92* is timed. The first stage is limited by a volcano erupting, the second by an assassination etc. This means all you have to do is learn the important places and items, get them and finish the stage, so trial and error will solve the game faster than brain power. This may not be a bad thing for new players but most people will be able to solve the puzzles straight away.

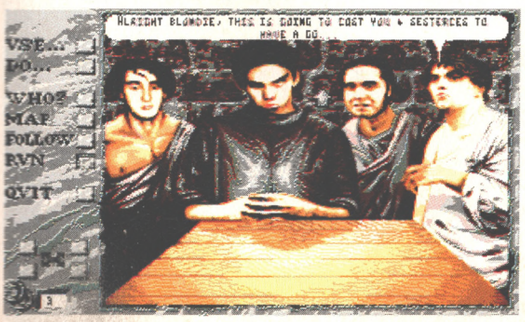
Playing through the levels, you'll notice something else creeping into your mind. *Rome AD92* suffers from 'Ohmy godwhenissomethinginterestinggoingto happen' (said while yawning exaggeratedly) syndrome – you can wander around locations for days without having the foggiest idea about what's going on. Talking to people is suggested as a good way to suss out what's happening. This doesn't work since most of the people seem to be as thick as two short planks. Ask them for information and the best you'll get in response is 'I'm out for a walk.' Thanks a lot.

The gameplay soon gets very repetitive, and mistakes aren't easily forgiven either. There's a classic example right at the start – you deliver a message and get paid for it. The amount you get paid is enough to save your life and leave the island. But, if you do take the chance to leave, you can't do anything at all on the next level because you don't have enough money, and there's no way of going back to get any. Once you realise what you have to do to get this extra cash you get very little time to do it, and if you do it on the higher levels you get killed for it. Quirks like this in the gameplay can put a lot of people off – if it wasn't for the fact that I'm being paid to play it I certainly would given up.

It's a shame, because when you start playing it's quite fun. Running around mugging people in Herculaneum for money or playing dice in Rome to earn enough to get a slave of your own, or even the fights when you get an army – all top stuff. After a few hours though, you realise there just isn't enough to the game to make you want to stick with it. With a few more elements it could have been so much better. But there aren't, so it isn't.

Yes, it's a challenge to become the Emperor of Rome all right. Some of this challenge is in the game but most of it comes from trying to keep your interest going long enough to complete it. With little action it won't appeal to arcade nuts, but it isn't a strong or deep enough game to attract all the strategy fans either. Millennium have tried hard to make it appealing by adding a lot of humour (and it is funny) and making it easy to control. With these two factors and some interesting gameplay it would have been a killer game but as it stands this is a wimpish slap on the wrist when it could have been a knockout.

● *LES ELLIS*



Cheap at twice the price, especially when you cheat. Cheat too often however and these likely lads will do a jig on your head.

Is that one of those silly fake names like on The Life of Brian, it certainly sounds daft. But console yourself, it could be worse.

UPPERS Attractive static screens set the atmosphere of the game nicely (and gruesomely too in some cases). Initially compelling gameplay with some fun aspects. Even the manual is interesting and funny, and for this type of game that's virtually unheard of. It'll hold you for a while as you try to get to grips with it.

DOWNERS The graphic style seems a little out of date (*Populous* viewpoints are old hat) and the small characters and jerky screen scrolling don't help much. It's short on action too, and what there is offers as much excitement as watching paint dry.

THE BOTTOM LINE
A fair attempt at an adventure that only just misses the mark. You can't help feeling that if a little more was put into the action, ie more things actually happening, then this could have been so much better. As it stands, though if you do buy it you should prepare for a bit of a snooze.

59 PERCENT

SHUTT

Delve into the deepness of space with the ultimate in flight simulation.

Game: Shuttle
Publisher: Virgin Games
Author: Vektor Grafix
Price: £30.99
Release: Out Now
Other details: One meg required

Outer space. It's a pretty big place. But it means a lot more to mankind than an endlessly expanding blackness peppered with a few mildly interesting stars. It's the Final Frontier. It's about flashing down the Death Star trench with Luke Skywalker. It's the massive shoot-out at the end of Moonraker. It's 2001 – A Space Odyssey. It's Flash Gordon. It's a terrifying journey on the Nostromo with the Alien. It's about going light-speed in the Millennium Falcon and warp-speed on the USS Enterprise. Outer space, not only is it big, it's damned exciting too.

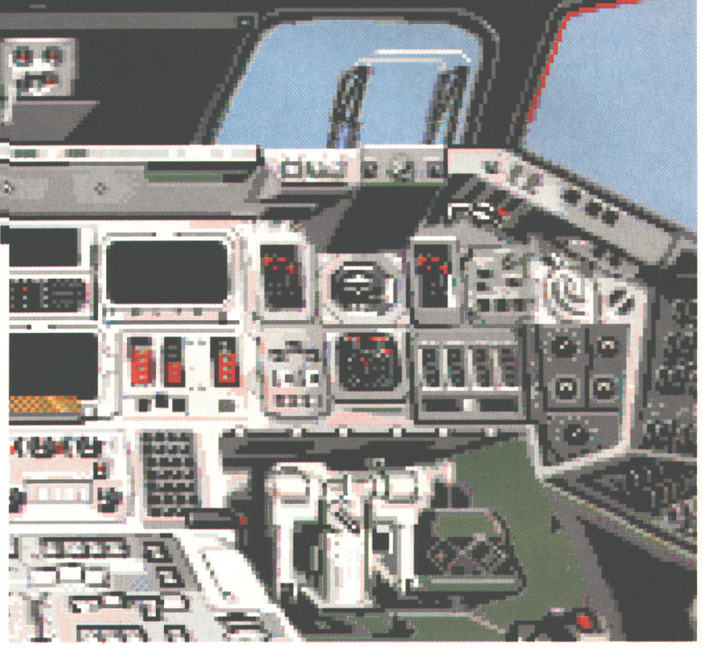
And then there's *Shuttle*. With all this intense action going on all around, with fictional alien races just waiting, if not begging, to be destroyed, what do we get? A simulation of a jumped-up glider that takes twelve hours to launch (if all goes well) and can barely put a satellite into orbit without causing palpitations at ground control in Houston. It's hardly the stuff the Close Encounters of the Third Kind are made of, but then if you want a realistic simulation of man's first re-usable spacecraft, you certainly came to the right place. The only trouble is, you might end up regretting you ever turned up.

I WANNA TAKE YOU HIGHER

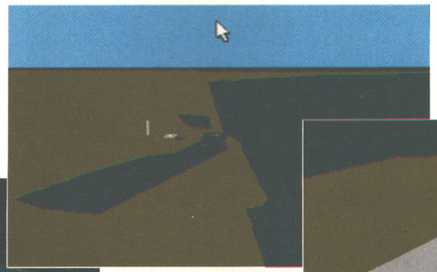
Don't expect too much excitement from *Shuttle*, after all the craft was only designed to transport cargo into near-Earth orbit (that's between 100 and 217 nautical miles up, fact fans), not to repel alien invaders. You can just imagine the tension as earth comes under attack from swarms of well-armed extra-terrestrial craft, and the shuttle is our last line of defence. "Er, can you just hold on a minute. Roll-out's going to take seven hours, then we've got five hours on the gantry, so, all being well, we should be able to fight you in about 12 hours time. Is that a date?"

This game, and I use the word in the loosest not-very-much-fun-to-be-had-here-at-all sense, is all about the nitty-gritty and tedious realism of piloting the space shuttle. And yes, if you do have a burning desire to experience the ultimate in mind-numbing simulation, you can sit back and watch for seven hours while the shuttle moves from the hangar to the launch pad.

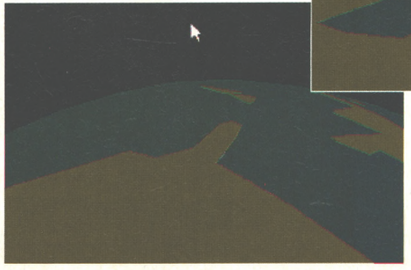
The game does its best to break you into the gargantuan simulation by giving you a bit of a dolly for the first mission – the shuttle's riding piggy-back on a 747 and you just have to land it. But even so, there are a good few buttons to push as the ship cruises in, and it's all too easy to miss the runway and trash your multi-billion dollar glider. The game's sensible structure means you have to complete a mission successfully before you're allowed on to the next one, so you have to master the



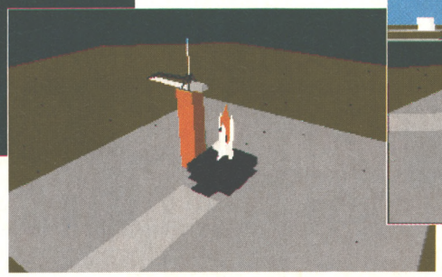
See those buttons? They're all for pressing they are. Take a peek at the shuttle's cockpit and the enormity of the task you're about to undertake becomes apparent.



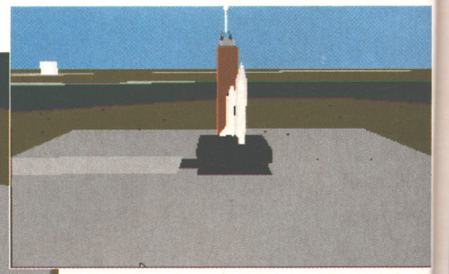
Hmmm. I can't help feeling a little disappointed. I thought the view from up here would be better than this.



Now I don't want to build your hopes up unnecessarily, but I think I can see your house from here.



No, I tell a lie, it's not your house, it's a big white glider strapped on a load of fuel tanks and stuff.



Well cut my legs off and call me Shorty if it isn't one of those Space Shuttle things.

TLE

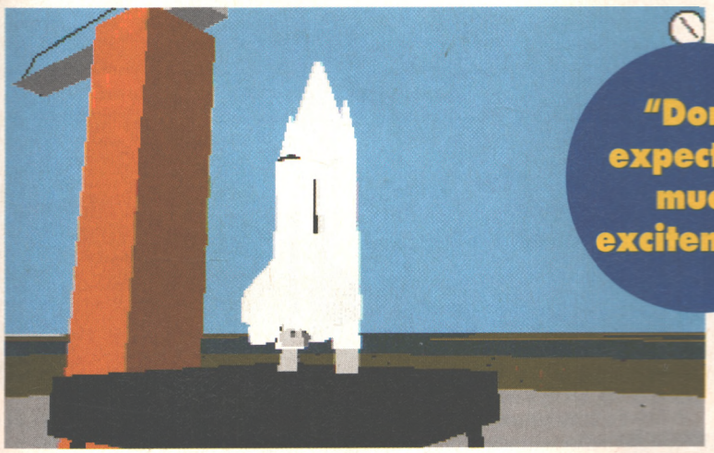
basics. On more advanced missions you're given a break down of your performance in several different areas, and no matter how hard you try, invariably it's the landing that lets you down. 'Shuttle was destroyed on landing.' Now there's one phrase I don't want to see again.

Thankfully, like a benevolent school teacher, the game only makes you re-sit the parts of the exam that you failed first time around, so you don't have to go through the lengthy rigmarole every time you slip up on landing.

I've never been a great fan of polygon-based graphics, and *Shuttle* shows their worst side. Total the ship on landing and you're treated to a not-so-spectacular display of grey-black smoke with occasional bits of shuttle flying from the darkness. And when you do manage to make it into space, the supposedly awe-inspiring view that has given astronauts more religion than Billy Graham ever could, is a decidedly sad three-colour set-up, with black sky, blue seas and green land. It's all rather disappointing really.

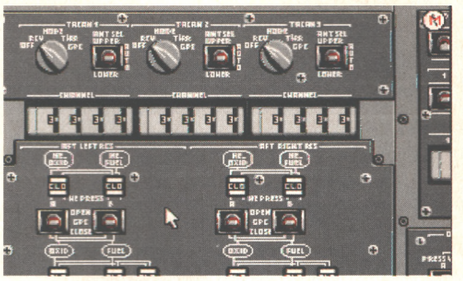
But when you've stopped admiring the lack of decent views, it's time to press a few more buttons. Messages from ground control tell you what the hell you're supposed to be up to, and on the easier skill levels the simulator automatically switches to the correct panel for the next button push. This is important at the start because there are eight panels to keep you entertained (I think it's one for each of the seven dwarfs and an extra large one for Snow White), all of which have more than one screen's worth of buttons. And depending on the mission, you have a variety of different buttons to push and clocks to watch.

And so it goes on. *(Hang on a minute! What's all this 'Snow White' rubbish? – Ed)* More missions, more buttons, more realism, more cock-ups, more explosions.

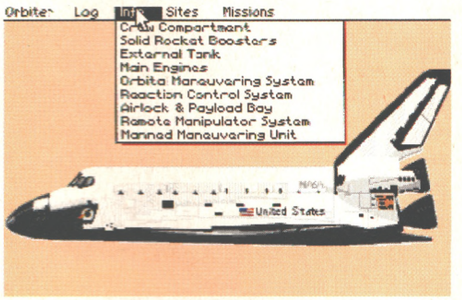


"Don't expect too much excitement"

Never offer to take the Shuttle out on a date. It'll take it twelve hours to get ready, and cost you more than the Gross Domestic Product of a small Third World country.



There's certainly no shortage of confusing buttons, knobs, dials and things to twiddle with...



...nor of information on the Shuttle itself. Whatever you want to know, it's in there somewhere.

Some of the trickier missions, such as repairing the Hubble telescope and attaching a crew module to a solar panel, provide more scope for manual interaction, but they're all pretty slow. Don't expect anything to happen quickly. Apart from the lack of speed in what's being simulated, the game grinds at the disks every time you switch to another control panel – playing on a single-drive machine is an absolute joke.

The space shuttle is such a complex beast that the simulator is necessarily tough to get to grips with (it makes *Megafortress* look like a shoot-'em-up). Astronauts have years of training before they're even allowed to covet the hallowed shuttle shape, but somehow Vektor and Virgin expect you to climb aboard and fly around without a tutorial. Sure, the manual explains all the menus, and what all the buttons do, but it's stuffed full of acronyms, initials and jargon. The game will keep you going for ages, but that's partly because the shuttle's so complicated and the manual does such a bad job of explaining how to control it.

I CAN SEE FOR MILES

Never having flown a real space shuttle, and never having been into outer space, it's hard to say how well the game recreates the out-of-atmosphere experience. One thing's for certain though – the Earth, moon, seas and continents aren't made out of polygons, so the view would be a lot more inspiring. As an exercise in by-the-book button-pushing simulation, *Shuttle* scores top marks. If it's knobs and switches you want, you got 'em in abundance, but don't expect a game – this is too much like hard work. Ultimately it might be rewarding for Shuttle fans – there's everything they could possibly want, apart from the experience of trying to eat pureed microwave chicken curry from a foil packet in zero gravity – but for the majority of the Amiga-owning population, there just isn't enough fun.

● *RICHARD LONGHURST*

UPPERS The best simulation of the space shuttle currently available for the Amiga. Realistic in practically every way, the attention to detail really is astonishing.

DOWNERS Not much fun to play, the presentation is poor, the manual's unhelpful, disk accessing is a pain.

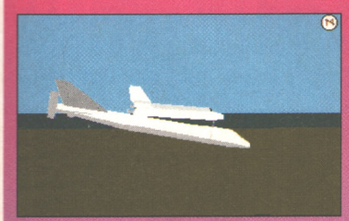
THE BOTTOM LINE

If you're a big NASA fan and have always wanted a shuttle simulator, buy it now. If you think it might be worth a look for novelty value, think again. If you like to enjoy yourself when you're playing games, steer clear.

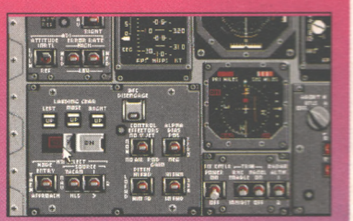
58 PERCENT

BOEING, BOEING, GONE

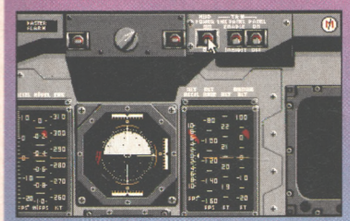
Mission number one is a bit of a doddle. Start on the 747 and end on the runway. Easy.



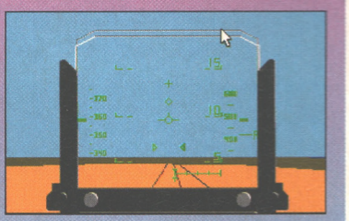
I told you we'd be able to hitch a lift if we landed on this jumbo. Oooh, hang on, it's nearly time to get off. Next stop please driver.



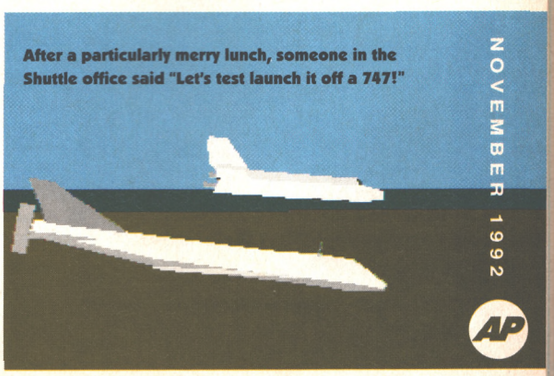
Next, put on your landing gear. It's yellow lycra hot-pants with a see-through plastic scarlet bodice for me. Alternatively, just flick the two switches.



Don't forget to turn on the head up display. Hey I really dig you, head up display. *(You're fired – Ed.)* Alternatively, just flick the two switches.



And ease the shuttle down for a smooth landing. What could be easier? *(Knitting fog – Cynical Ed.)* Now it's time to find more buttons to push.



After a particularly merry lunch, someone in the Shuttle office said "Let's test launch it off a 747!"

SHADOW

around a space station for a bit in this sequel to the hit RPG, *Shadowlands*.

Take a fully trained team of explorers and fighters and then stumble

Publisher: Krisalis
Price: £25.99
Authors: Teque
Release: Out now

It's been explained on more than one occasion that, here at AMIGA POWER, the reviewer's opinion is what counts in the end. The rest of the team have their say, of course, but ultimately, if a reviewer really doesn't like a game, he's completely at liberty to say so. Whatever anyone else might be telling him.

In the case of *Shadowlands*, however, Mark's been intolerable. "Look at those shadows – aren't they terrific?" he said. "What a great weapons system," he said. "What do you reckon to those puzzles, eh?" he said. "You'll probably be giving this a pretty high score, won't you?" he said. "Say, about 88?"

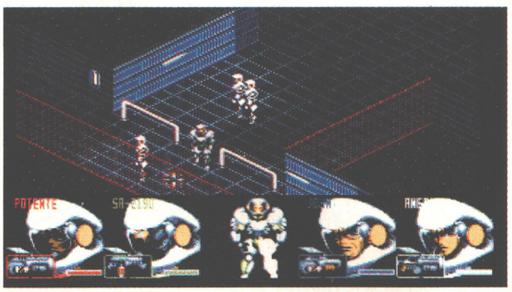
In fact, to escape the pressure from above, I've had to take my Amiga, my copy of *Shadoworlds* and my word processor, and withdraw to an undisclosed location on the outskirts of Bath. From here, I hope to be able to tell you just what *I* think of the game.

Shadoworlds is the sequel to *Shadowlands*, which was reviewed by Mark back in AP11. (He gave it 87%.)

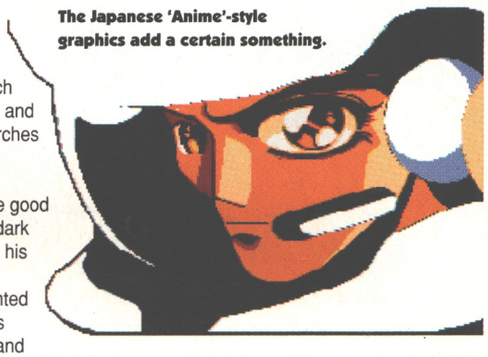
"I suggest you rush out and buy it immediately"

While *Shadowlands* was set in a traditional fantasy role-playing environment, replete with wizards, warriors and magic potions, *Shadoworlds* plumps for a more universally-appealing sci-fi setting with an Aliens-like plot. Having picked your team of four soldiers,from the selection available – there's no 'character creation' facility like in the original – you're put in a dark, deserted space station and told to discover what's happened to its crew.

Finding the solution will involve solving puzzles, fighting baddies, and masses and masses of exploring and mapping. You'll have to wrestle with door switches and teleporters, and at some points you might even find yourself down on the surface of the planet the space-station is orbiting. Integral to all this is the 'Photoscaping' system, which gives a nice graphical effect and means you'll have to use torches and flares to find your way around the space station.



Our team reach a T-junction. Which way should they go? How about both ways? But how? By splitting them up into two teams, obviously.



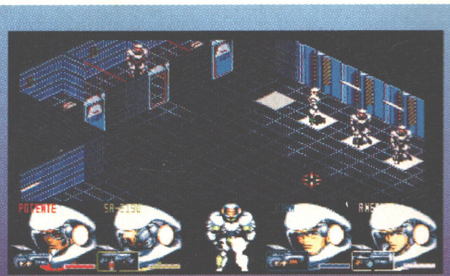
The Japanese 'Anime'-style graphics add a certain something.

Now, Mark covered the good points of Teque's light-and-dark RPG system in his *Shadowlands* review. He pointed out how objects have weights, and characters have strengths, and these all work together to give a realistic, intuitive 'game world'. He extolled (at some length) the virtues of the much-simplified role-playing system, which cuts out all the wisdom/dexterity nonsense and replaces what numbers remain by simple bar-graphs. He got really rather excited about the way the lighting effect doesn't just look nice, but is involved in the solutions to some of the puzzles, too. And he thought the help system was just wonderful.

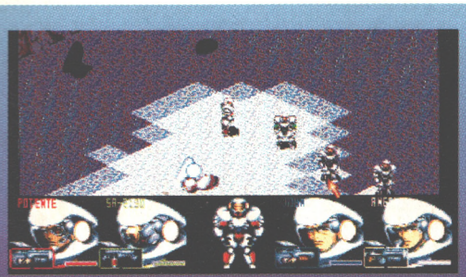
Now, seeing as how that stuff's already been covered, and how I'm not quite such a big RPG fan as Mark, I'll use what space remains for a different purpose – the other side of the story.

One: The characters are so stupid. One of the game's selling points is the way you can make characters walk around in formation, to save moving them all individually. But trying to get a formation of troops to walk through a narrow doorway is farcical. They jostle each other around for ages, then a couple of them might eventually get through, with the others getting jammed somewhere behind the walls, unable to figure out where to go next. And one character's quite happy to shoot another who gets between him and a baddy. You really don't want to have to worry about that kind of thing in the heat of

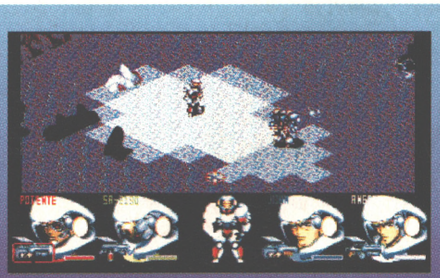
Your team is picked from a list of, er, about twenty characters. (I forgot to count. Sorry.) In this instance I've gone for GT3970 – a token member of the animal kingdom; Stevens – useful for his ability to breathe helium and speak in a squeaky voice; Angel – who has a habit of suddenly starting to shout about helicopters and Viet Cong guerrillas; and Yoko – she embarrasses the rest of the team by walking around naked with flowers in her hair.



Hey, let's play Star Trek. Us three'll go and stand on these teleporter pads, while SA 2190 acts as Transporter Chief O'Brien. It'll be fab.



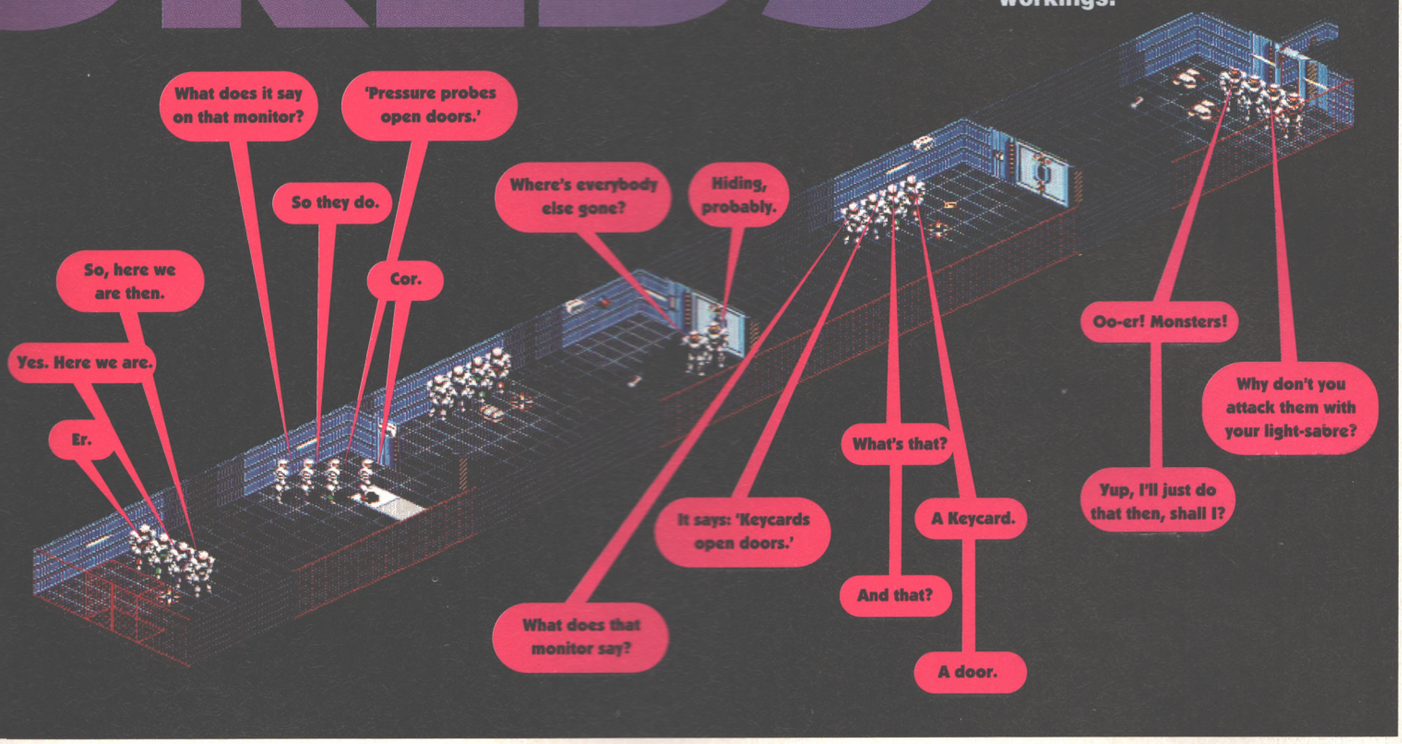
Woah! The team weren't quite banking on being teleported down to some sort of planet, where they're being shot at by an unseen adversary.



Potente goes off to investigate, and comes face to face with a giant, invincible robot. (We won't show you the next bit, where he dies horribly.)

ORLDS

The first few rooms of Shadoworlds serve as an 'entrée' (as it were), introducing you to the game's workings.



a frantic battle.

Two: The control system. It's meant to be really simple to use. But to get a character to, say, move from one point on the screen to the other involves the following steps: First you need to select the character you want to move by clicking on one of the pictures at the bottom of the screen. Then you have to move over to the generic figure in the middle and click on its leg. Finally you click on the point on the screen you want to move the character to. If you just want to dodge a laser bolt, this is plainly ridiculous. Why not dispense with the first step by having a full figure for each character? Plus, it's really hard to see which character is currently selected, or which character is which on the screen. And battles are made even trickier by the limited range you can give orders over. If you've got one of your characters and a monster at either end of an otherwise empty screen, you've got to walk your character to within a few feet of the monster, through whatever it might be throwing at you, before you're even allowed to take aim. Very irritating. With all that business with the controls to worry about as well, you really haven't a chance.

Three: fluid levels. The one hangover from fantasy RPGs in *Shadoworlds* I could really do without is the need to keep checking on your team's fluid levels, topping them up if they run low. If you let them run out, your team dies. (Fluid, in *Shadoworlds*, is a nutrient solution that combines food and drink.) Consequently, I found I spent far more time worrying about fluid levels than solving puzzles or shooting baddies. I don't remember seeing Sigourney Weaver, locked in mortal combat with an Alien, suddenly turning to her colleagues and saying, "Sorry, lads. I haven't had a drink in twenty minutes. You'll just have to manage without me."

I could go on. *Shadoworlds* is full of similar flaws – flaws which could easily have been eliminated by slightly more thoughtful playtesting.

And now for the exciting twist at the end. You might have got the impression, from my opening comments and the rather dejected tone of the paragraphs that followed, that I wasn't terribly impressed by *Shadoworlds*. Well, you couldn't have been further from the truth. I thought it was fab. I've had enormous fun reviewing it, and I suggest that you rush out and buy it immediately, even if you don't normally go for this sort of thing. It's just that its (relatively minor) shortcomings annoyed me so much that I'm going to have to knock a couple of points off the devastatingly high score I'd otherwise have given it.

I hope Mark doesn't mind.

● *JONATHAN DAVIES*

"A universally appealing sci-fi setting"

BIG, BIG GUNS

Above: Here's the kind of rubbish Potente carries around with him – everything from first aid kits to flame throwers.

Right: You can choose your team's formation by moving the dots around in here. You can even split them into two teams.

Spells are a thing of the past (literally). In *Shadoworlds*, combat takes place with guns. Your party sets off on its quest unarmed (for some reason), but soon comes across a variety of weapons. The simplest are light sabres, and small arms like pistols, which take up one slot in your inventory. Best of all, though, are two-handed weapons. These are found in halves – barrel and stock – and can be mixed and matched to make custom artillery. Fix a cannon barrel onto a laser stock and you've got a laser cannon. Swap the cannon barrel for a machine barrel, and you've got a rapid fire laser. Simple, huh?

UPPERS All the advantages of a role-playing game – enormous size and depth, character interaction, lots of variety – without the penalty of complexity. So everyone will enjoy this. The puzzles are really cunning, too – if a little unlikely at times.

DOWNERS While the lighting system works beautifully, creating buckets of atmosphere and tension, overall the visual side is a little dull. The action frequently gets ahead of the control system. Character intelligence is limited – you have to take care of literally everything.

THE BOTTOM LINE

It's got all the advantages of its predecessor, while bunging in enough new stuff to make it worthwhile. It did hack me off at times, though.

85 PERCENT

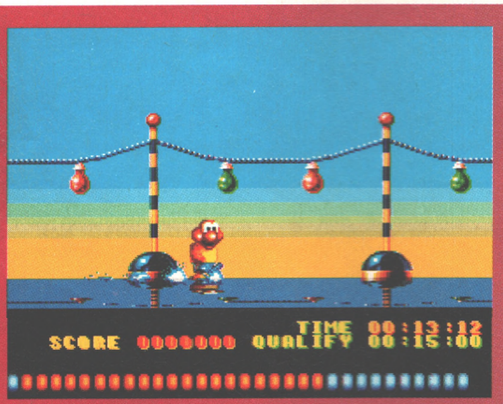
AQUATIC

The latest James Pon

Game: The Aquatic Games
Publisher: Millennium
Authors: Vectordean
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

Fun, frolics and sponsership in Penguin juggling – kipper load of that.

CROSSING THE EVENT HORIZON – SO WHAT D'YOU DO, THEN?



1 THE 100 METRE SPLASH

As James Pond, waggle that joystick like crazy (you're actually running across water, so go too slowly and you'll sink!) and, er, that's it. If you can avoid knocking the seagull out of his boat early on, he'll fly along and give you a speedy lift towards the finish line. You're in competition with F-fortescue Frog, but he's useless so don't worry about it. You can also headbutt the toucans which perch *(Right, that's it, you're fired – Ed.)* on the bunting along the course a few times for bonus points, and getting all three brings the seagull back even if you sank it earlier.

Fishy Fun Factor: ★★★

2 KIPPER WATCHING

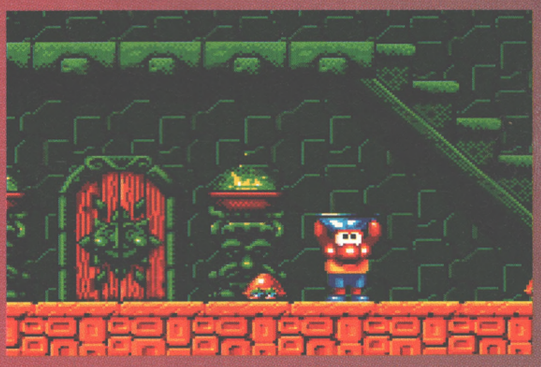
You play Ceceelia the seal, and you have to avoid having your sleepy seal friends woken up by the beach balls which some unfriendly swine's chucking at them (you can just see it, can't you? Some callow youth wandering along a tropical beach, spots a load of seals sleeping, thinks 'Hey, wouldn't it be a great laugh if I scared them all off? Bloody other species, should all go back where they came from anyway', and starts lobbing a convenient nearby infinite supply of large beach balls at them. I love plots, me). You do this by leaping around and nutting the balls before they hit your mammalian pals and wake them up, at which point another hit before they drop off again will send them scurrying off the beach in fear. Occasionally some swine will set off an alarm clock which wakes all the seals up and makes things really hard for you, so you should stop him (by jumping into the clock) if you possibly can. Lose two seals and it's all over, and you win medals by surviving for as long as possible before it happens. You can also grab bonus points by leaping into the angel fish which appear at the edges of the screen occasionally, yielding increasing scores from 100 points up to 10,000. The toughest thing about this event is trying to avoid falling asleep by about halfway through, especially in multi-player mode when it can take over quarter of an hour to play to the end.

Fishy Fun Factor: ★

5 FEEDING TIME

The most manic event in the game, Feeding Time sees you playing Freddie Starrfish as he tries to save some of his sweet-toothed aquatic buddies from the clutches of some nasty fishermen. Freddie's job is to tip tasty titbits from his bucket in order to stop his comrades from being tempted out of the water by the sugary confections lowered on the end of the bad guys' fishing rods. As the bucket empties, he has to rush from side to side to fill it up at the dispensers at the edges of the screen, but while he's doing that, the liquorice allsorts are getting closer and closer... When two fish are caught, the event is over, so keep 'em out of trouble for as long as possible.

Fishy Fun Factor: ★★★★



6 SHELL SHOOTING

This is the most co-ordination-testing and potentially frustrating event of the lot. Again, you play the part of sub-aqua superhero James Pond. You have to jump on the edge of limpet shells as they meander across the screen (slightly faster than in real life – limpets aren't generally known for their fleetness of foot or whatever it is they move about on) flip them up into the air, catch them as they come down and then throw them back up the screen to burst a series of balloons. Tough enough, without the spiky limpets which you can't jump on, and the fact that if you let a limpet walk into you on the ground, it knocks you over and stuns you for a while (and which point another one runs into you, then another one, then etc etc). Quite tricky and very frustrating.

Fishy Fun Factor: ★★★

GAMES

Ponuting invites you to the Sole Olympics. *(That's fintastic – Ed.)*

The latest (and hopefully last) of this year's multi-event joystick-waggling sports sims is one that takes a bit of a different approach to the previous efforts. Unlike *Carl Lewis Challenge* and *España – The Games '92* (both reviewed in issue 17, with 56 and 38 percent respectively), The *Aquatic Games* isn't an o-fish-ial licence of *(Hold it right there! One more piscine pun in this review and you're fired. – Ed)* Ah. Er...

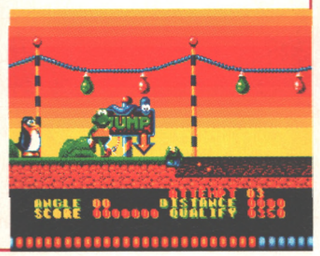
● *STUART CAMPBELL*

"The liquorice allsorts are getting closer"

BONUS EVENTS

If you qualify for a silver medal or better in an event, you also get the option to take part in a bonus event. You have to sacrifice a few points for the chance to enter, but if you succeed in the bonus event you get a lot more points back, as well as a Shield Of Merit. The ultimate aim in *The Aquatic Games* is to complete the whole thing with eight gold medals and six (the maximum) Shields Of Merit.

The bonus events give F-fortescue Frog an encore appearance in a long-jump contest that's just a simpler version of the Hop, Skip And Jump, and bring the previously-unseen PJ Penguin into the action as a juggler in another time-survival event, and while they're a nice extra, they're both too easy to provide much interest after the first try.



UPPERS Cute graphics, lovely bouncy tunes, lots of statistics (although some of them are a bit confusing – how can you have a lead of 1200 somethings in the 100 Metre Splash?), some funny bits (try standing still at the start of the same event), um...

DOWNERS The same failings as every other joystick-waggling sports game, ie it's super-repetitive, and it's dull and pointless if you're playing it alone. Some of the events drag on for too long. And as with the original *James Pond*, the area of the screen used for action is pretty titchy.

THE BOTTOM LINE

It's the best joystick-waggler of this year's crop by quite a way. It works reasonably well, and it's nice to pick up every now and again, but there's only about half a day's entertainment (three-quarters if you've got your mates round) in this at best.

60 PERCENT

3 HOP, SKIP AND JUMP

This is a triple-jump contest straight out of the *Hyper Sports* coin-op. Waggle the joystick like crazy, hit fire when you get to the 'Jump' sign, continue to waggle the joystick like crazy, hit fire again shortly afterwards to determine angle of jump (the game stops and a little graph moves up and down at the appropriate moment), and hope you've managed to propel F-fortescue Frog far enough to qualify. Pretty easy, really, but it's nice to get back to a bit of good old honest frantic joystick destruction after the repetition and boredom of the last event.

Fishy Fun Factor: ★★★

4 THE BOUNCY CASTLE

Time for a spot of gymnastics now. You (as James Pond himself) have to bounce up and down on the sponges (by way of a simple rhythmic combination of joystick moves) to gain enough height to execute various mid-air manoeuvres. There are six different ones (including some tricky combination moves), each of which you have to do six times within an overall time limit to win a medal, preferably without falling off the trampolines and smashing your head in. It's pretty difficult to tell whether or not you're going to land safely on the sponge after you've done a move, and the mysterious jack-in-the-box which sometimes shows up in the middle of the screen and propels you miles into the air without having to bother with all that tricky joystick stuff seems to appear and disappear completely at random, which is a bit disconcerting. Some of the combination manoeuvres are a bit too awkward joystick-wise for my liking, too.

Fishy Fun Factor: ★★

7 TOUR DE GRASS

After the Shell Shooting, the next event is a bit of a relief. You play Mark The Shark (an ex-circus unicycling shark from Finland) *(Of course he is, how foolish of me not to have thought of that myself – Ed.)*, and your task is simply to get to the end of an obstacle-littered horizontally-scrolling course against a time limit. The difficult stuff comes in when you realise that to keep him cycling, you have to keep rotating the joystick in a clockwise direction, which is trickier than it sounds when you have to co-ordinate fire-button presses to jump obstacles and collect bonus point objects as well. Still not all that tricky, though.

Fishy Fun Factor: ★★

8 LEAP FROG

The 100 Metres Splash with obstacles to jump. A bit of a doddle, and something of an anti-climax after everything else.

Fishy Fun Factor: ★★

SABRE TE

Launch your very own assault Middle Eastern terrorists in Krisalis's latest strategy game.

It sure *sounds* like a recipe for success.

A 3D SAS game loosely based on the classic *Laser Squad*?

Game: Sabre Team
Publisher: Krisalis
Authors: Dean Lester, R Theather, M Furniss, P Hackney
Price: £25.99
Release: October

Ah, the SAS. After that memorable raid on the Iranian Embassy in London in 1980, the SAS were forced into the public eye and what a shock it was for most people. The most secret of the secret services showed just how big and hard and clever they were by wiping out a load of terrorists without losing a single team member to 'friendly fire'. Then down the local for loads of drinks and tall stories about how tough and butch they all were. Not bad for a night out with the lads eh? So what has all this to do with a team running around with sabres? Well, actually, a Sabre Team is a four man SAS attack unit, trained to kill and keen to do it. Great, eh?

Krisalis have put their heads together and come up with a combat/infiltration strategy simulator (God, if I have to see just one more combat/infiltration strategy simulator this month...) that puts you in direct control of one of these crack teams. And of course, since it's computer controlled, you won't have to go through the arduous training or suffer eating live worms on a wet weekend on Dartmoor, either (Hey, we said that they were tough, we didn't say anything about them being smart.)

So what does it take to become a cool commander of the toughest hombres in the world? Well, it takes three things – muscle, brawn, patience and brains. *(Arf – Ed.)* Patience? Yes. Patience because this is a strategy game so you aren't going to run all over the place with your finger twitching on the trigger, but before all the action nuts start to turn the page looking for an arcade game review, read on – you might just like this as well.

Sabre Team is a mixture of strategy with a little simulated combat thrown in.

The computer movement screen, one you'll see a helluva lot of.

Okay, a lot of simulated combat. After all, this is the SAS and if they can't fight they're about as much use as a pacifist in the Los Angeles Police Department.

Unlike some strategy games, *Sabre Team* is very pleasing to look at. The 3D view works really well, and for once common sense has come into play. After all you can't see what's in a room until you enter it and you can't see who is standing behind you unless you're facing them, can you? It also helps create a fair amount of atmosphere – imagine the scene as you face a closed door. Your energy's low and your gun's almost out of ammo. You've heard a noise in the room but you don't know whether it's a hostage, a terrorist or even one of your own men. Will you open the door and go in or wait for the rest of your party to catch up? You get old heroes and you get bold heroes but never old, bold heroes. The choice is yours.

"Aside from the speed there's no problem with it"

You get five missions to guide your team through and they're by no means easy. Although you get three skill levels you're still going to be put to the test. The strategy side of the game can be as intense as you want it to be – you can fuss around deploying your strongest men at strategic points and hunting down the terrorists, or you can just send your team in guns blazing to wipe out anything that moves. Both strategies could meet with a surprising amount of success,

One asleep on the job and one to be gunned down, all in a days work for a hero.

He shoots, he misses by a mile, it would help if he was facing the right way of course.

Someone's left a mortar lying around. How many times must they be told to put things away after using them?

TEAM

Before you try and sneak up on someone, don't forget this loading gun business.

or on the other hand...

I must admit I did enjoy playing *Sabre Team* at first, the graphics are surprisingly good for a game like this. The controls are very easy to use and you think there's a lot to it. After all any game where you can shoot a suspect in the back without asking any questions and then go and stomp on the body and nick any weapons worth having can't be all bad can it? No, it isn't (all bad, that is).

One major, major problem though, is the speed. I know it's a strategy game and so you don't expect to see 50 frames a second, but when the computer is working out its moves it can take absolutely ages. We've been assured by Krisalis that it's as fast as the Amiga can handle it but I feel sure that it could have been done differently – look at the legendary *Laser Squad* if you want proof. As it stands it's a major hold-up and gets really annoying after a while.

Ah, a warm fireplace, and a drinks cabinet. I think I'll stay here.

Aside from this, though, there's nothing wrong with *Sabre Team*. The clear display and good graphics are attractive and easy to use. You'll find it no problem to send your team wandering all over the place. Combat is just a case of spotting the enemy and deciding how much ammo to use on him – too much and you'll waste it and have to use up action points reloading sooner, but not enough and he won't be dead, and then you'll be sorry. When the enemy are making their moves they can attack you as well but providing your men have enough move points left over, and their reactions are fast enough they may get a free shot called an Opportunity Move.

ON THE OTHER HAND...

Yeah, it's pretty bloody slow, but this is such a beautifully atmospheric and accessible game that it's worth putting up with a bit of hanging around. And I disagree about finishing all five missions, too – the different actions and positions make it a totally different game each time. *Battle Isle* was slower than this and we still gave it 78 percent, that's more in the area of where I'd mark this.

● *STUART CAMPBELL*

The ideas in the game work really well and it is quite entertaining to play, if it wasn't for that damn slow computer thinking. If you like games that will make you think but are easy to get to grips with then start looking at this. If however you don't like to be kept hanging around for ages doing nothing while the computer works out a move then look in the opposite direction before you turn to stone. Although the speed lets the game down badly there are some interesting elements of gameplay that will hopefully attract both strategy and arcade fans. This is nice.

● *LES ELLIS*

UPPERS The graphic style is attractive enough to make you think 'wow that looks the business'. The controls are pretty easy to get to grips with and basically it's dead easy to get into.

DOWNERS The computer is hideously slow (anything up to three minutes) at making its moves which totally destroys the logic system. There are only five missions, although they are very tough, and once you've completed them you won't want to go back (although the locations and actions of the enemy and hostages will be different every time). The static screens are pretty awful as well, but not as awful as the game speed.

THE BOTTOM LINE

I know I keep on about the speed but it really is slow and spoils what could have been a really good game. Destined to be banished into the realms of strategy, which is a real shame.

68 PERCENT

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE – THAT'S WHAT YOU ARE. MISSION IMPOSSIBLE – TOO MACHO BY FAR (Oh boy. – Ed)

The start of the mission and the guys are sunning themselves by the pool.

This guy just won a fortune on the fruit machine after I finished.

Now he's down stomp on the body a bit to see if he's got anything worth nicking.

Do anything possible to stop this guy getting on the karaoke machine.

Face to face at last, time to try out that new combat shotgun your granny gave you for Christmas.

There's someone in there with their back to you, definitely the best time to shoot.

And while you're doing that this guy still finds time to go to the loo, these guys are well 'ard.

A corridor littered with bodies signals another successful shoot out for the SAS.

CURSE OF ENCHANTIA

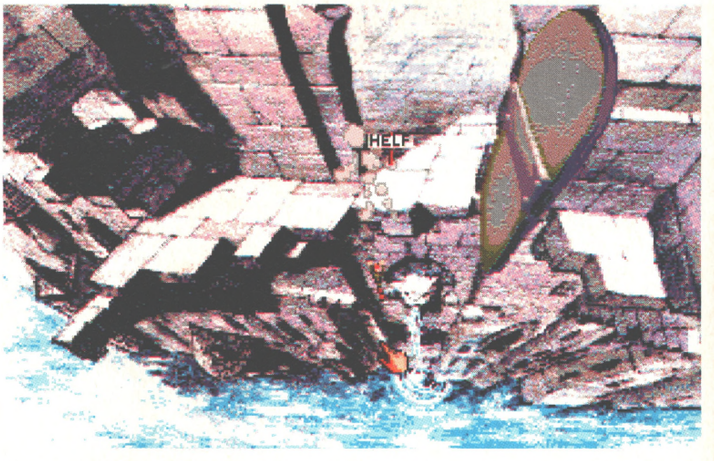
In a continuing attempt to try every genre, Core go for the humourous adventure.

Game: Curse of Enchantia
Publisher: Core Design
Authors: Rob Toone, Billy Allsion, Rolf Muhr, Stuart Atkinson.
Price: £34.99
Release: Late October

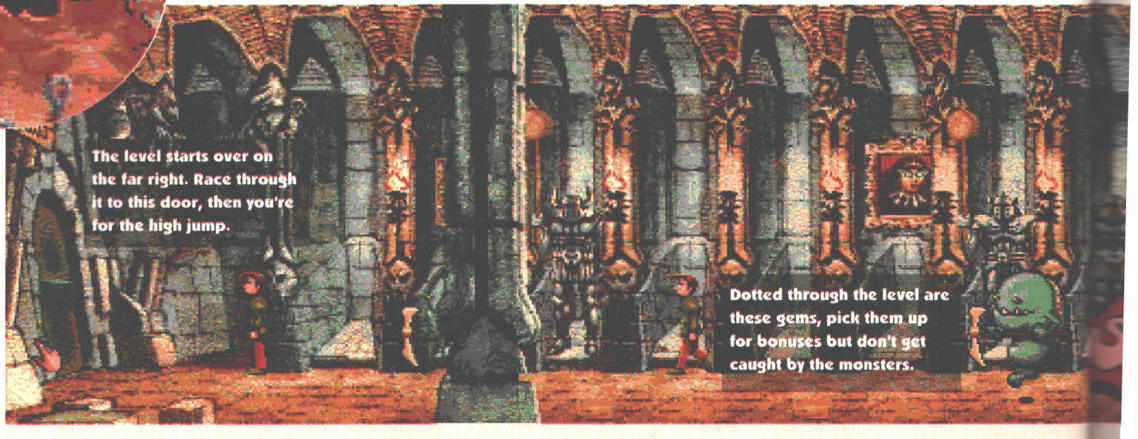
I've heard some ridiculous storylines in my time but nothing has ever come quite close to this. Are you ready? A boy is playing baseball with his sister. He winds up to smash a pitch into the stands when he's suddenly zapped into another dimension by an evil witch who just happens to be watching through a crystal ball. When Brad wakes up he has to return to his own dimension, presumably in time for the ninth inning. With such a corny story behind it it's probably just as well that *Curse Of Enchantia* has turned out to be a cracker of a game.

It seems to be the fashion over the last few months to make RPGs less boring, some have even attempted to inject humour into a traditionally humourless genre. The French were having it almost all their own way with the likes of Silmarils and Coktel, and only *Monkey Island 1* and *2* stood in their way, but now they face new opposition. In *Curse Of Enchantia*, Core Design have come up with one of the funniest games I have ever played. It makes a very refreshing change to be able to say to someone that you really enjoyed playing a game and it kept a smile on your face throughout with its wacky humour and hilarious on-screen antics. Well, that's what Core have managed here. Well done lads.

Looking at these screenshots, you can probably see that the graphics in *Curse* are very similar to those in the *Monkey Island* games. The dark and shadowy effects create a hell of an atmosphere, especially when you are trekking around the underground caves trying to find your way out. Even Brad, who is your character, looks and moves like Guybrush Threepwood, but before anyone starts shouting 'rip off', though, don't bother. This style is just about the only thing that will make this kind of RPG playable, and it



It's a breathtaking view, and a frightening drop, he slips over the edge, hits the water and...plop. (This and various other captions © Dr Seuss, 1992)



The level starts over on the far right. Race through it to this door, then you're for the high jump.

Dotted through the level are these gems, pick them up for bonuses but don't get caught by the monsters.

works, so why change it?

Although good graphics help a game like this along (and this one does have good graphics), let's face it – in an RPG it's the game that catches you, and while *Curse* is a cracking game it won't quite match up to the Monkey Islands of this world. The main reason for this is simple – some of the puzzles are just too obscure. I like games to make me think as much as anyone but there are some cases in *Curse* where you can't actually see items that you need to solve a problem, two classic examples being the seaweed that you need to fool the monster and the gold coin (look, just trust me, okay). Some of the other solutions would take you a lifetime to think up because some of them just aren't logical. Funny yes, but logical, no.

"Enchantia has turned out to be a cracker of a game"

As I mentioned before, humour plays a big part in this game and it's this humour which makes up for the strange way some of the puzzles are laid out. Call me easy to please *(You're – oh, forget it... – Ed)*, but for some reason I found the ugly monster throwing himself down the well when he saw Brad take off his disguise (oops, almost gave you a clue there) and saw that he was pink and dry quite funny. If that doesn't tickle your fancy then the underwater antics of the shocking shark might... Whatever you normally find funny you'll definitely get a few chuckles from this game.

Size isn't always a guarantee of quality (or so I've heard anyway), but in *Curse Of Enchantia* you get both. There are over 200 different locations to visit and most of them contain puzzles or items that will need picking up and manipulating. The control system that you'll be doing it with is different from most other games of this genre as well – none of this 'point at an object and choose a word to see what it'll do' stuff. The French RPGs like *Fascination* suffer really badly when you're stuck because all you have to do is move the mouse over the screen to see what objects become highlighted.

This always strikes me as pointless because it makes it possible finish the game more by trial and error than actually thinking about it. In *Curse Of Enchantia* you don't get this so you have to really apply your mind to using the objects. This makes it harder but a damn sight more satisfying to play.

Just a quick mention of the sound effects now. You can choose which sound option you prefer at any time which is a nice user-friendly touch. Keep an ear out for some of the samples though. As you would expect they're pretty funny. My own personal favourite is in the dungeon right at the start when you call out for help and the ogre comes in and tells you to keep quiet in no uncertain terms.

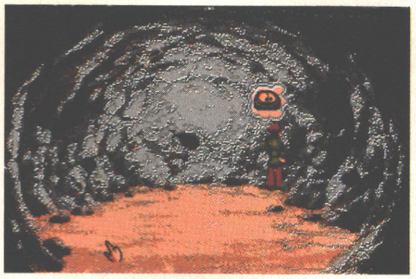
So what have we got? *Curse Of Enchantia* is a definite winner as far as I'm concerned. The difficulty curve is set just right, although some of the puzzles are so obscure you start to wonder whether you'll ever solve them. Getting stuck is easy but getting out of trouble just requires a little straight thinking and exploration. As with most adventures examining objects normally reveals clues. Accomplishing even one of the easy tasks gives you a great sense of achievement which makes you feel maybe the whole thing is worth persisting with. And when you suss out one of the tougher problems, well you feel like telling the whole world.

Curse Of Enchantia may not be the biggest RPG ever but it's certainly not small, and with the amount of wandering around you have to do it seems a lot bigger than it is. With the ultra-lafftastic approach that Core have taken with it, it can hardly fail to be a hit – most of the time it's even funnier than *Monkey Island* (*1* and *2*), and from someone who's as big a fan of those as I am, that's really saying something. *(Bop bop shoobie doo waa. – Ed)*

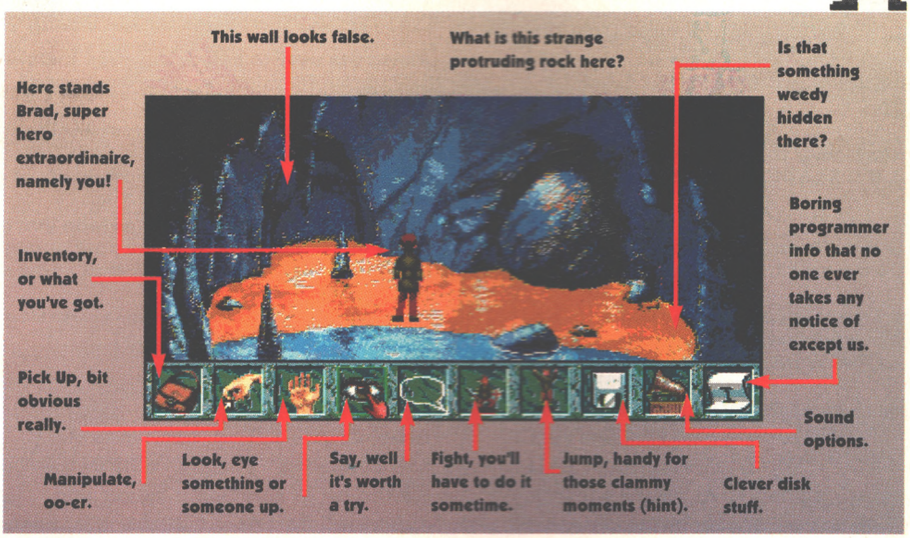
Rarely has a game made me want to spend hours and hours trying to solve puzzles – most of the time I'd have been reaching for a solution, but not here. Core Design have come up with a classic adventure game that deserves to be a huge hit. Just watch this one crash into the charts.

● *LES ELLIS*

In through the door, with a shout and a leap, he'll leave you in chains, while you wail and you weep.



I'm pleased to report, I'm glad to declare, that we've found a nice clue, in the cave over there.



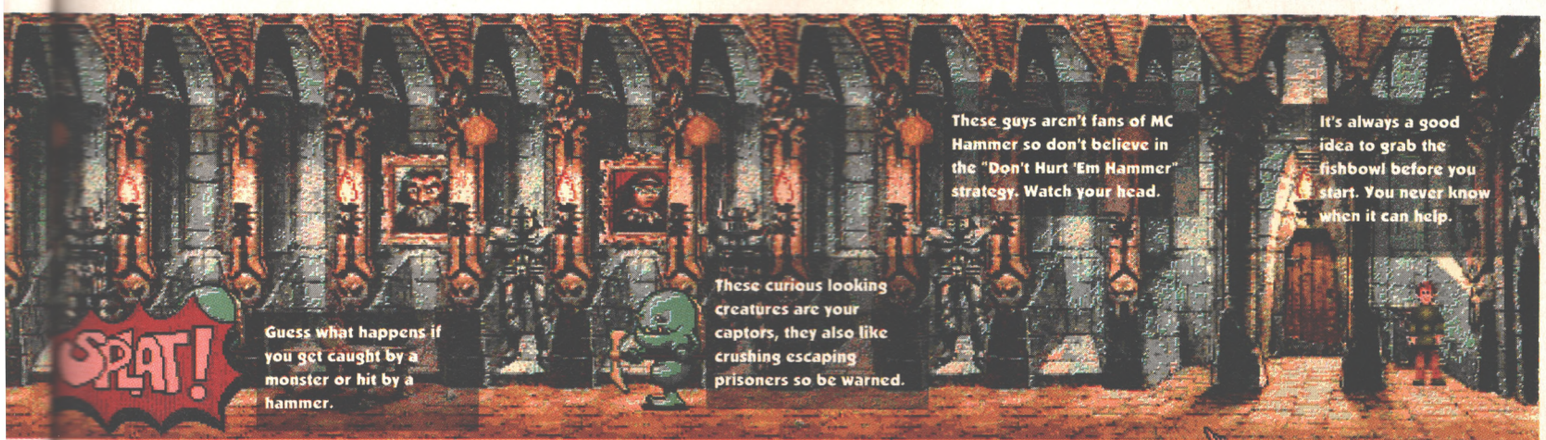
UPPERS Wow, where do I start? Fun throughout, with the finely detailed graphics adding to the overall atmosphere. With its mixture of puzzles and humour this could make a monkey out of *Monkey Island*.

DOWNERS Some of the solutions to the puzzles are very obscure which may make some people give up after a couple of hours. Having objects that you can't actually see (like the seaweed) seems to pointless. And the price tag is disgraceful.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Core have come up with a classic adventure which with a few tweaks here and there could have easily beaten the *Monkey Island* and the like. A worthy addition to any collection and will stand as a challenge to any adventurer.

87 PERCENT



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From the Action Replay III preference screen you can now set up autofire from 0 to 100%. Just imagine continuous fire power? Joystick 1 and 2 are set separately for that extra advantage!

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if you enter a command without a filename, then a file requestor is displayed.

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including Mem Watch Points and Trace.

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SHE ADORES IT!

Abigail Hampson (17) from Camden reads ***Sega Power*** – Britain's best-selling Sega magazine. She owns a Mega Drive and her favourite games include: ***Sonic*** (she's now on level 5), ***Mickey Mouse*** and ***James Pond 2 – Robocod.***

Abigail's outfit by benetton

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COMPLETE control

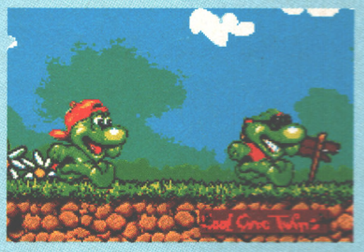
It's a bumper Complete Control this month with hints for *Fire And Ice* and *Lure Of The Temptress*, but first here's Jonathan Davies with his bits'n'bobs...

THE COOL CROC TWINS

(Empire)

Why the long faces? Matthew Downes-Grainger of Redcar has worked out the codes, which are as follows:

Triax
Dream
Mungo
Janko
Henri
Doors
Floyd
Bruno
Money
Human
Girls



Punk and Funk, for heaven's sake! What kind of names are those for vicious reptiles?

TOP SECRET

(AP Disk 17)

Glynn Hosking of Truro (and several, nay, millions of other people) spotted that pressing F10 takes you to the next level. David Hayward of Gosport was alone, however, in discovering that you can make yourself invulnerable to collisions with baddies by entering your name as MOOG into the high score table.

Owls, squirrels, spiders, magnets, ladders, blocks, platforms. *Top Secret* has 'em all.

THE MANAGER

(US Gold)

If those icons and lists of numbers are simply becoming too confusing, try the following: go to the preferences menu after the game has loaded and position the cursor on the arrow below where it says 'Main Menu' on the small square at the bottom right of the screen. Press the letter D on the keyboard a few times and you'll see a white line in the border of the screen. Go into the transfer market and you'll discover that all the players in your team have 99 points for their strength etc., and you have £24,999,999 to spend on anything you like. You can do this as often as you like.
Thanks to Alan Kelly of Glasgow for that one.

Skill? Judgement? Pah! Who needs 'em when you can just cheat your way to bags of money to spend as you wish.

STEG THE SLUG

(Code Masters)

Chris Hughes of Harrogate has slugged it out *(Grr – Ed.)* through all ten levels. Here are the codes:

Level 2: RDNUHCCMGU
Level 3: EDOUTIOCKO
Level 4: HDPFUVLCCM
Level 5: ODQMFUVLIC
Level 6: MEBHETPIAG
Level 7: LECGLDTRHK
Level 8: NEDGFLDVRL
Level 9: OEFVHAGHLV
Level 10: PEGTTHIGLD

Steg, for heaven's sake! What kind of name...
(Don't start that or there'll be trouble – Ed.)

RISKY WOODS

(Electronic Arts)

Try pressing
F1 to increase your lifeforce,
F2 to increase your cash, and
F3 to skip the stage
suggests Brian Owens of Redhill.

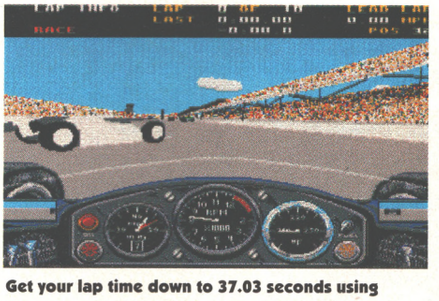
They're risky. They're wood-like. They're...
(Don't you dare – Ed.)

INDIANAPOLIS 500

(Electronic Arts)

(Oh no.) Gideon Cresswell of Maidstone writes:

"I really hate being beaten. I especially hate being called crap. That makes me mad, really mad. Ian Baker had a lap time of 37.09. To me, that's pole position. I don't like not having my customary pole spot. Quite recently I had cut my lap time to 37.22. I was satisfied until I was insulted. I got mad. I informed my pit crew of the new tyre pressures. I got my time down to 37.14. It wasn't enough. I then told them to fit the soft compound to my right front wheel. First lap: 37.30. Second: 37.19. I thought I was done for, but then, driving at 110%, it came: 37.03 seconds at an average of 243.05 mph. I'd done it. So a word of warning to Ian Baker and anyone else, nobody can challenge me and nobody calls me crap."
(Sorry.)



Get your lap time down to 37.03 seconds using these tips. But if you beat that, don't tell Gideon.

In our final installment of our *Fire And Ice* playing guide, we enter the murky depths, then over the page, journey deep into the Amazon jungle, to the land of the Incas.

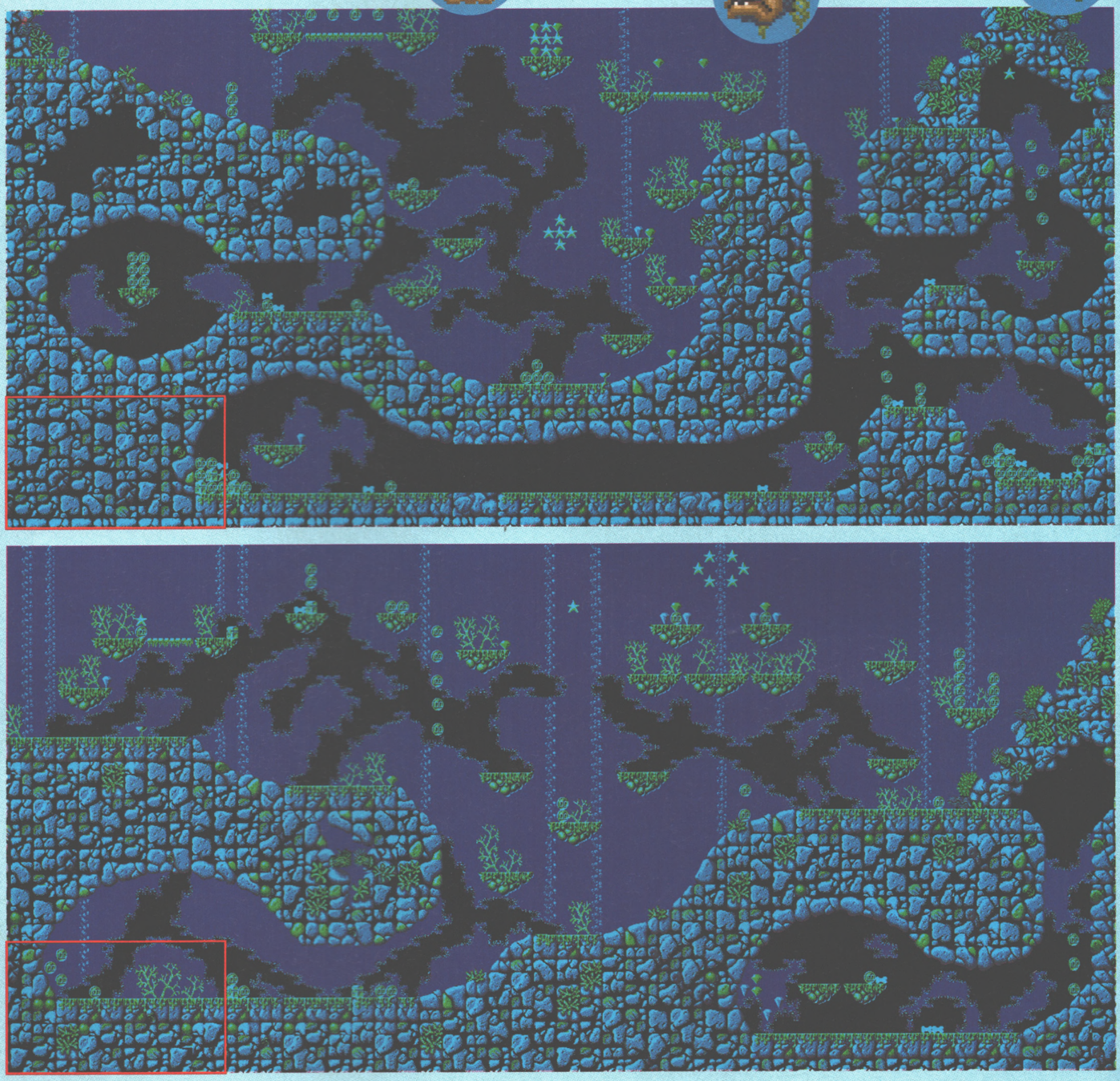
MORE INDIGENOUS CREATURES

UNDERWATER
Our intrepid hero sends the puppies by boat across the sea, and dons scuba gear for a quick exploration of the depths.

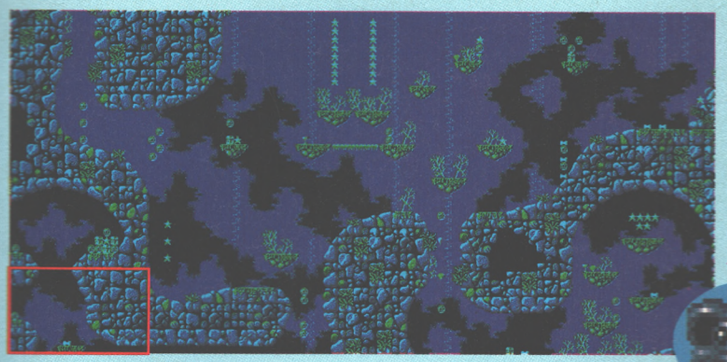
DIVERS
Other creatures are also diving to the bottom of the ocean in search of treasure. Watch for their air bubbles below.
Hits to freeze: 2. 150 points.

UGLY
These fish mainly lurk near the surface. They scare their prey to death just by looking at them.
Hits to freeze: 1. 200 points.

PROPELLOR FISH
A cross between an ugly fish and a sunken motorboat, this fish has



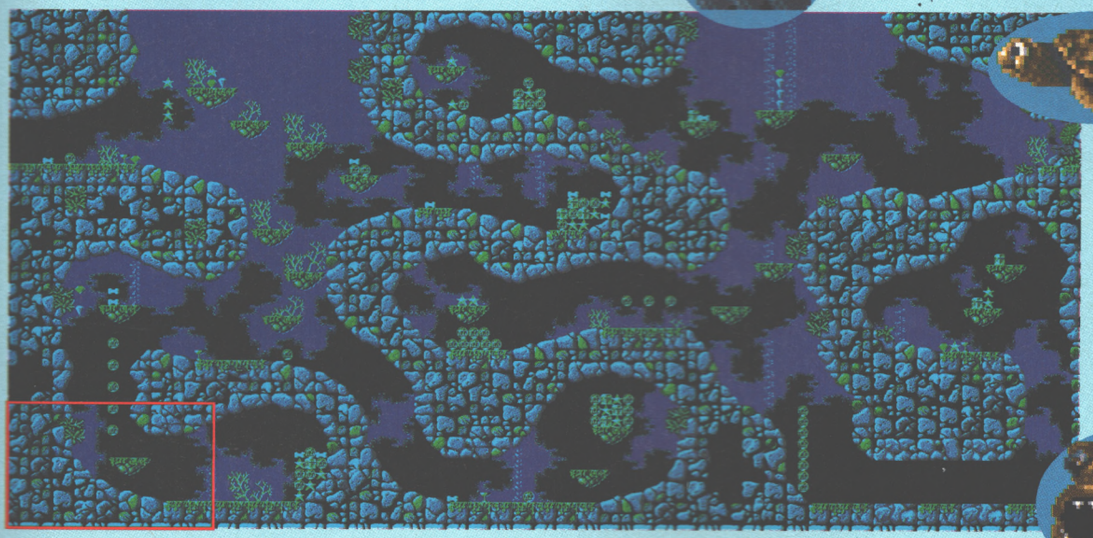
FIRE A



evolved a more speedy way of moving underwater. Hits to freeze: 1. 200 points.

TORPEDO FISH
The fastest fish of all, the ancestor of these fish accidentally swallowed a torpedo in the middle of a fierce sea battle.
Hits to freeze: 2. 500 points.

CLAM
These live on the sea bed, minding their own business,



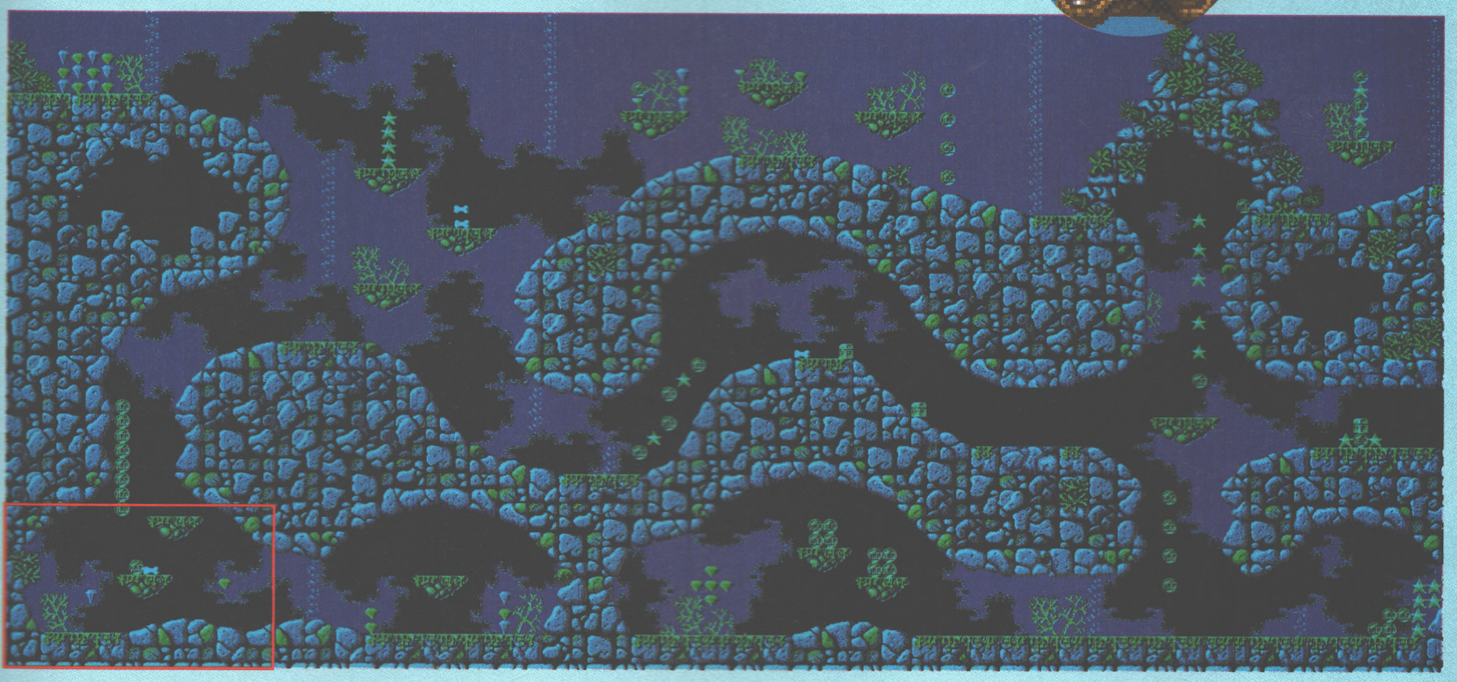
and all coyotes do is use them as springboards. To get maximum height from the springboard, jump on them from a fair height and then push up as late as possible before you're thrown off.

SQUID
What can you say about a squid? *(How about 'lend us a squid till the end of the week'? – Ed.)* Horrible slimy things, but very tasty fried up with a bit of butter and lemon juice!
Hits to freeze: 1. 250 points.

TURTLE
An ally amongst so many foe. These gentle slow-moving creatures will help you to reach the parts other coyotes can only dream about.

CRAB
Do the crustacean shuffle. There's always one lurking about somewhere where you'd least expect it.
Hits to freeze: 1. 200 points.

KILLER EEL
Lives in dark caves. Always eating yet always hungry. Watch out for the bones of its previous snacks.
Hits to freeze: 120.
10,000 points. →



ND ICE

FIRE AND ICE

INDIGENOUS CREATURES AND FEATURES CONTINUED

THE TROPICAL RAIN FOREST

Our hero resurfaces to continue the quest amidst the Amazonian flora and fauna.

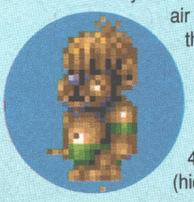
CATERPILLAR

These come in various lengths and live in trees. They have armoured bodies and so are vulnerable only at the head. Hits to freeze: 3. 750 points.

INCA

There are three varieties, the first lives across the river and hurls flaming spears.

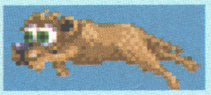
The second is the sneaky variety that hide in the reeds, occasionally popping their heads out for a quick look before blowing a poison dart. The third type is less bashful, they wander around in the open, also armed with a blow pipe. Some will maintain their position as guards, others will leap after you. All can jump into the air before firing to get the darts higher up. Hits to freeze: 1. 500 points (walking variety). Hits to freeze: 1. 400 points (hiding variety).



PARROT

Simple-minded non-flying variety. Hits to freeze: 2. 250 points.

CAT



This is no tabby, listen for its roar as it runs towards you. Hits to freeze: 1. 500 points.

CHAMELEON

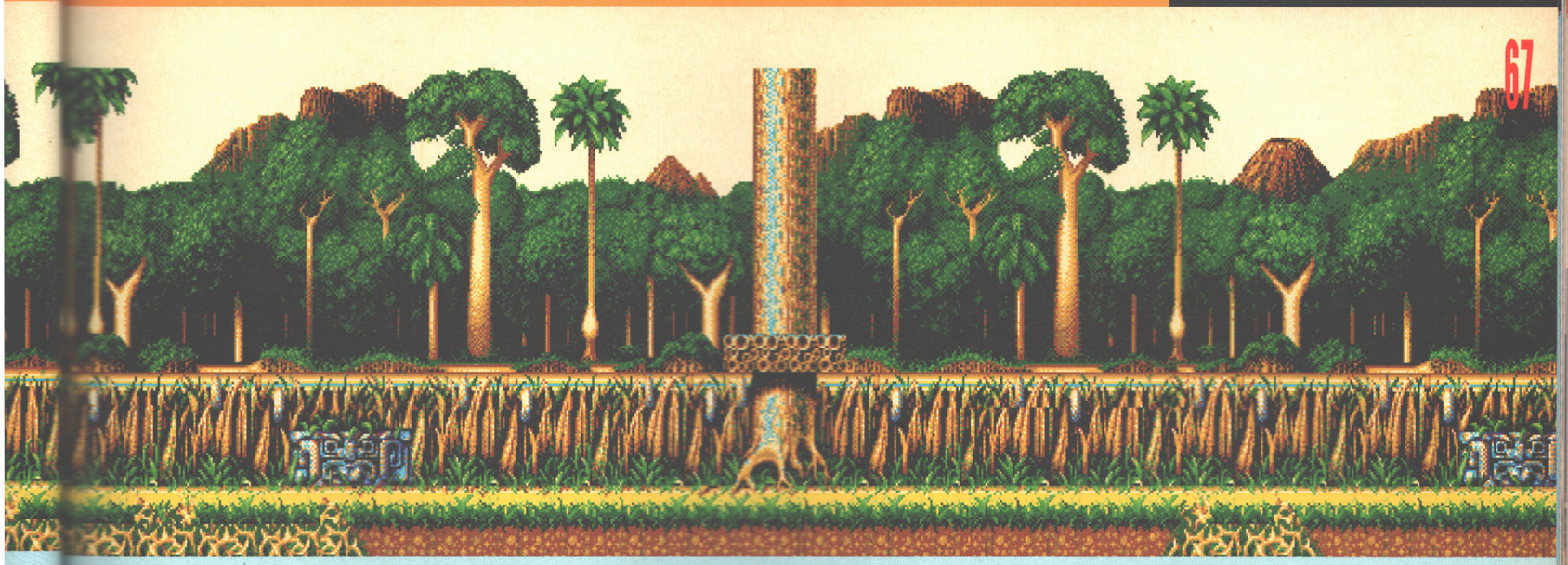
These creatures remain motionless, changing colour just because they can. They have long tongues for catching food. Hits to freeze: 5. 500 points.

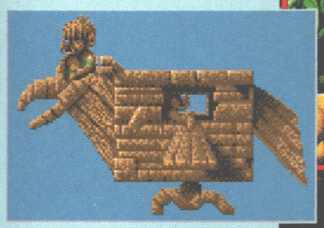
VENUS FLY-TRAPS

These plants eat more than just flies. They hunger for meat, coyote meat.

IDOL

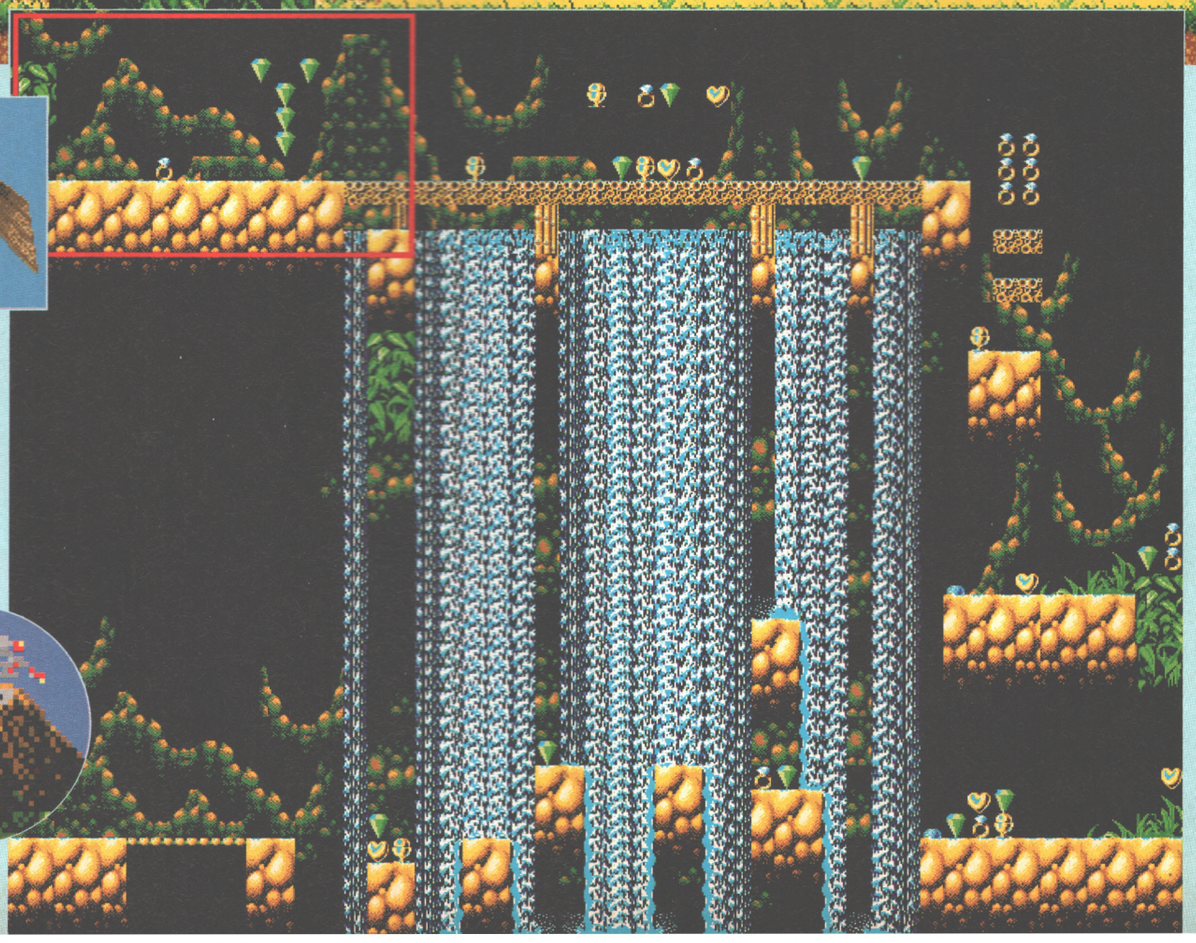
Stand on the hands of the idol to get beyond the venus field. Don't fall, and don't get too close to those snapping plants.





INCA FLYING MACHINE
They haven't quite conquered flight yet, but they've got close. Knock off the head and tail first to get the Incas to abandon ship.
Hits to destroy: 20.
5,000 points (tail).
Hits to destroy: 25.
10,000 points (head).
Hits to freeze: 30.
25,000 points (body).

VOLCANO
When the volcano blows, take cover. After that, good luck, and may the coyotes be with you. ●



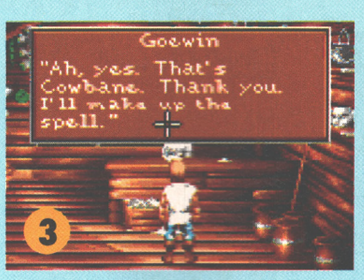
SECTION TWO
The Village (Continued)

1 Once you've released Goewin follow her to the herb shop. She won't believe you're Diermot because you're still in disguise as Selena – the ungrateful wench! Anyway go for a walk and enjoy your last moments as a woman. It won't be long before the spell wears off and you change back into your old manly self.

Once you're bursting with manliness again, go back to Goewin's herb shop and talk to her. She'll thank you and you'll get all sloppy and want to fall into her dreamy big eyes etc, etc, but there's no time for that – you've got a job to do. Now head back into town to the monastery. You'll see a notice posted outside, saying that the monks have lost their big book, and that a carved statue will be awarded to the lucky blighter who recovers it. Sounds like a job for... guess who?

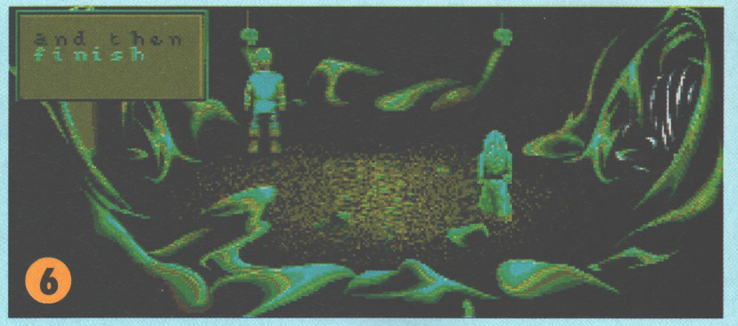
2 You could try 'Booksearch' but you'd be better off talking to the village characters. Who's the dodgiest character with a finger in every pie? Mallin of course. Talk to him – he'll give you the book and ask you to take it to Morkus. Don't bother, he's the traitor in the village as you found out from the Skorl when you were disguised as Selena. Take the book to the monks and they'll give you the reward and tell you about the dragon, and more importantly tell you about the herb mixture to gain control of him.

3 Once you've been to Goewin's herb shop and found out that she has all the ingredients except Cowbane, your search is on again. Luthern's dear old mum might be able to tell you, if you don't get bored stupid by one of her weird old stories. Once you've found the elusive herb take it back to Goewin who'll mix up the potion for you.



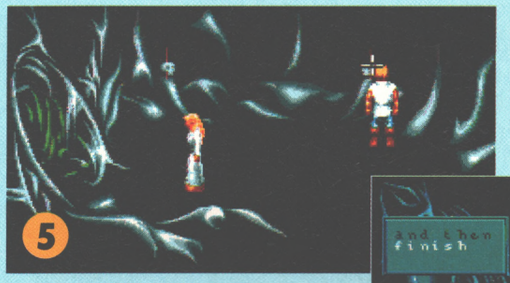
Now you'll have to find out where the dragon lives. Go and have a chat with Grub in front of the Magpie pub. He'll tell you to look for it in the caves of the Weregate, but be prepared for a fight with the deadly creature that lurks in the caves. At the Weregate, all you'll find a is a couple of stony gargoyles and a closed gate. Go and have a chat with Ultar in the Severed Arms.

4 Up until now all Ultar would tell you is "simple – turn brain boxes," which isn't much help. Now he'll tell you the names of the gargoyles – Fengael and Hammawen – to whom you must talk in order to gain entry through the Weregate. They tell you that their creator ordered them only to allow women through the gate. But what about Ultar, you ask. Well, he put on a pair of rubber breasts, they tell you – seems everyone likes dressing up as women in this game!



In order to get through the gates you're going to need a woman. Why not try that cute babe at the herb shop? Goewin seems quite moody about the whole idea, but in the end she agrees to meet you at the gate. Once at the gate, talk to her about the gargoyles and she'll call out their names, upon which the gates will open.

5 Goewin will follow you through the open gates into the entrance cave. In front of you there are two skulls. Look at them both, and then pull the right skull. The door opens allowing you to enter into the green cave. Goewin follows.



6 Look at both skulls again – Goewin will not be able to pull them unless you have looked at each skull. Goewin can take a while to follow you in. Once she's with you, tell her to go back to the entrance cave, pull the left skull and then pull the right skull. Then she must come back into the green cave. As she reluctantly carries out your instructions, the door opens and you're able to enter the blue cave.

7 Pull the left skull to let Goewin through. Now tell her to go back to the green cave, pull the left-hand skull and then the right-hand skull. This allows you to pass through the last door and into the dark cavern.

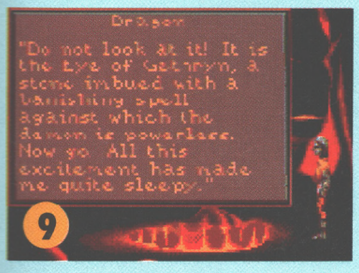
8 Walk up to the top of the cavern and go through the exit at the top right. This takes you into the lair of the beast. He'll kill you if he can, so it's time for combat. Fortunately for you it appears an axe was left lying around. Use this to fight

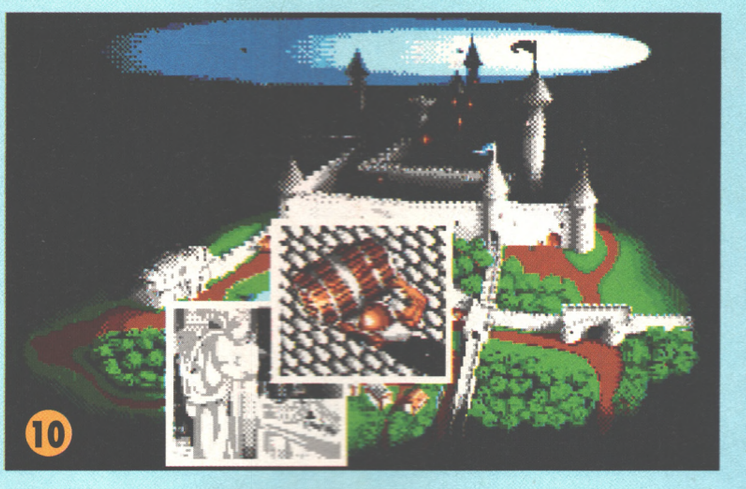
LURE OF TEMPTR

Matt Squires butchers the beast and gives the Skorl a dose of their own medicine,

your enemy. I found the best tactics were to advance quickly and go straight onto the offensive. No girlie defence tactics – just use middle body shots which lunge quickly at the much slower beast. Keep up the continuous thrusts into the beast's flesh and you'll be victorious. Whatever you do, don't let him get so much as one hit. Once you've sliced him to bits, stand back and admire the gore. Use the tinderbox to light a fire and roast his putrid flesh. Yum! Barbecued beast, you can't beat the taste. (Er, or don't bother. I might have been making that last bit up).

9 Walk through into the dragon's lair and use your potion on him. The game will say that the potion doesn't appear to have worked, but don't worry it's lying. He'll do anything you say – just you see. Command him to help you. He'll spill the beans about the evil demon who has possessed Selena. Our Dragon friend turns out to be very helpful ally and gives you a magic eye. What use is this? Wait and see *(Arf – Ed.)*, we'll come to that bit later. Now leave the dragon, go back through the caves turning the left skull of both blue and green caves to open each door. Grab Goewin and make your way back to the village.





10 Go to Ewan's shop in the market place. Wait outside until one of those mutant meathead Skorl enters the shop. Go up to the window and look through. You'll overhear the ugly dogbreath slimeball *(I say, steady on Matt – Ed.)* complaining about how he and his friends haven't got enough food. He wants Selena killed, and he wants old Ewan in on it. The thickie Skorl tells Ewan to get into the barrel to be smuggled into the castle, and to be ready when he and his thickie friends come back later. Here's your chance to get into the castle. Wait for the Skorl to leave and then enter the shop. Tell Ewan you'll take his place in the barrel – he's very happy with this and helps you into the barrel. The Skorlies then come and smuggle you into the castle.

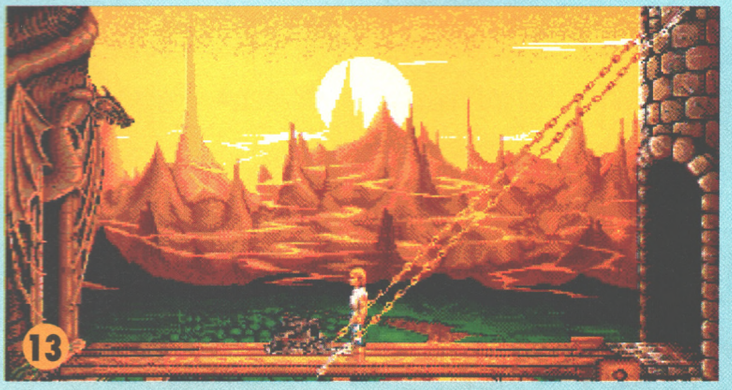
SECTION THREE
The Castle

11 From the cellar go into the kitchen. Here you'll meet a boy called Minnow. Have a chat with him – you're going to need his help. On the wall near the carcass you'll find a pair of tongs. Use these to pull out the bung on the cask in the cellar. Now tell Minnow to tell his Skorl master that someone is in the cellar. The blithering mound of rotten flesh *(You really don't like these chaps, do you? – Ed)* will come down and drink the wine overflowing from the cask. He'll fall asleep like the rest of his cronies. That's the meatheads taken care of.

12 Your quest to get to Selena in the tower is nearly completed. Get the lump of fat from the carcass in the kitchen and make your way through the banqueting hall to the gate house. Use the fat to loosen up the rusty lever. Tell Minnow to pull the lever, and at the same time, you must operate the winch. Leave the gate house and make your way back through the drunken dozing Skorl and up the stairs to the top floor. Exit onto the draw bridge which is now (conveniently) down and ready for you to get to Selena's evil pad in the tower.

13 It's not all over yet! There's a slimy killer beast standing between you and Selena's tower. Using the same tactics as before, go straight into the attack with middle body blows. If you keep it up, the slow old toerag won't get a look in. You can barbecue his remains if you like, but I wouldn't advise it. Killing him is your last task of the game. It's all over. Game Over. The Big Finale. The end of the quest. The closing of the storybook.

Anyway, you've made it this far, so just sit back and watch the end sequence. We won't spoil it for you, but there's a bit of a twist in the tale. ●



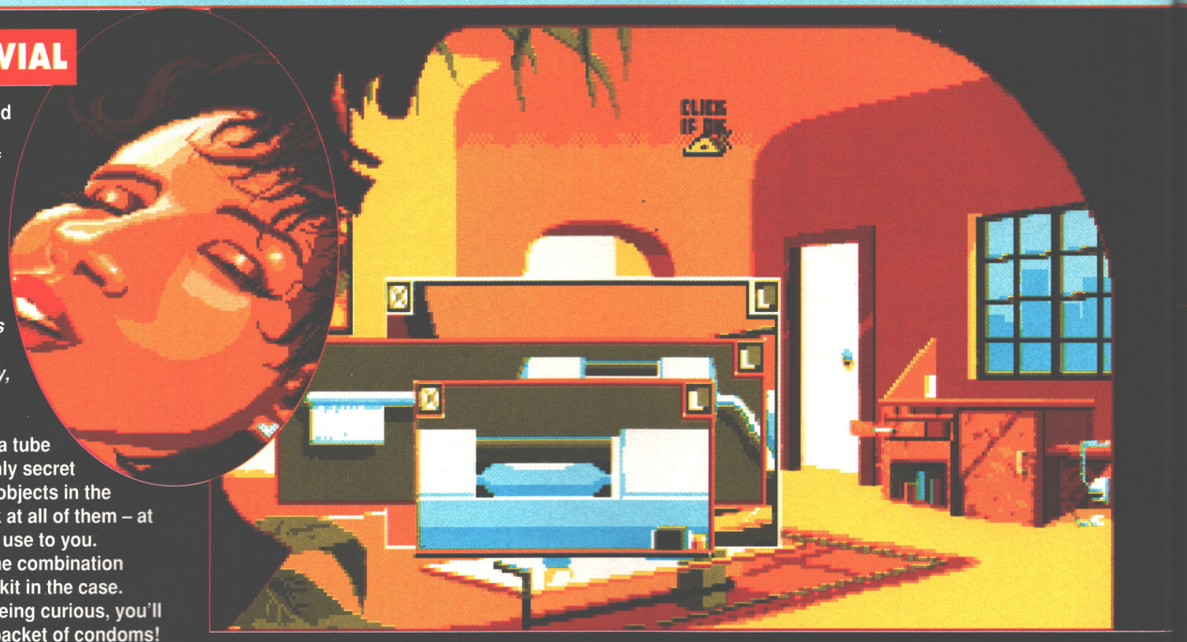
THE ESS

***Temptress* – The Conclusion.**

outwitting the evil Selena in *Lure Of The*

1. FINDING THE VIAL

On the flight to Miami a guy called Fayard Nicholls dropped dead at your feet. You now have his brief case. Your first location in the game is the hotel room. After your long and stressful flight you may well need a shower to freshen up – you'll find out exactly what it's like to be in a woman's body *(Steady on, this is a family mag. And besides some of our readers are female anyway, you daft clot – Ed.)*



Your first task is to find the vial, a tube containing a dangerous and highly secret substance. There's a number of objects in the room and it's wise to have a look at all of them – at some point they'll all be of some use to you.

Open the briefcase – use the combination AARGH. You'll find quite a bit of kit in the case. There is a pair of pyjamas and, being curious, you'll find that in the pocket there's a packet of condoms! A typically French touch. Most important is the electric tooth brush, but you'll need to plug it in to make it work. It won't fit into the fridge socket – you need an adaptor.

Go over to the desk and open the drawer. You'll find an adaptor. Take it out and plug it into the refrigerator socket. Now go back to the case. Take the toothbrush plug, and plug it into the adaptor.

Switch the tooth brush to 110v and turn it on. Surprise, surprise – it opens up to reveal the vial. Take it and leave the room.
Go down to the hotel lobby.

3. BACK IN THE ROOM

You now need to find a good hiding place for the vial. What about the fridge? Take the vial and open the fridge. Put the vial into the ice tray. What about some ice? Take the jug of water on the table and pour it into the ice tray. Now you need to switch the fridge on. Take the adaptor out and put it back into the drawer. Now pick up the refrigerator cable

and plug it into the socket. Now you have ice.

Next call Jeffrey Miller on the phone using the telephone number you noted down in the lobby. Note the entry code number of his flat. Just as you leave the room, old Romeo Robaire de la Cafetiere calls. He's in from Mexico and it would appear that you're having a bit on the side with him. Erm... interesting game – it's no wonder really, *Fascination* is the idea of French woman, Muriel Tramis. Leave the room and go to the pool, where you'll see Lechy Rob, dizzy Prisca and Shazzer, the barmaid.

In the first of our three part *Fascination* tips, Matt Squires joins that old French

FASCIN

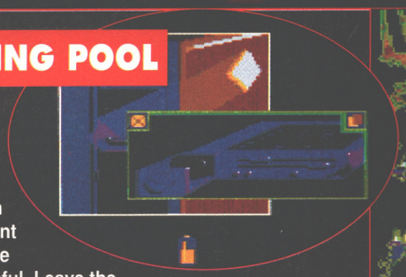
2. HOTEL LOBBY

Click on the newspaper. Underneath is a girlie magazine. Have a quick flick through if you like – you'll not only find a few scantily clad babes, but more importantly one of the corners is ripped off. Part of the telephone number

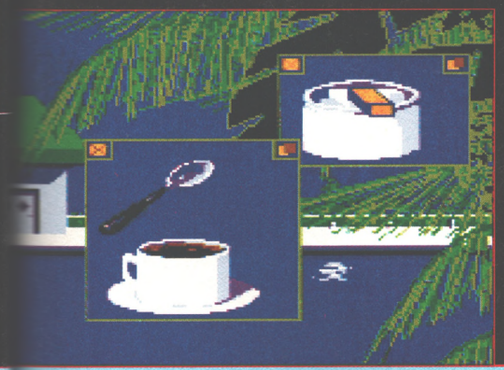
for a Lou Dale (the chap responsible for each photo) is missing. Make a note of the remaining number. Underneath the girlie mag is a Who's Who directory. Open it. Here you'll find Jeffrey Miller's personal number at the Quantum lab. Make a note of his telephone number.

Look around the lobby and you'll see a key ring on the table. Take it to Isalinda, the receptionist. It's a key tag for a locker in the changing booths by the pool. She'll give you the missing key. Look around again and you'll see an ash tray on a small coffee table. In the ash tray you'll find a token. This could come in handy so take it. Now go back up to your room.

4. SWIMMING POOL



Go into the booths. Use the pool key to open the locker door. Inside you'll find a broken walkman. Open the battery compartment with the token. Take the battery, it could be useful. Leave the booth and go outside to the pool. Speak to Prisca, your chief hostess. Dirty old lech, Robaire already knows her from a party in Rio. Anyway, what's more important are the items Prisca got from Nicholson when he had the heart attack – a torch and a pendant. You already have a battery so take the torch, it will come in useful later.



Where's the pendant? It would seem that dizzy old Prisca has dropped it somewhere.Take the hat hanging at the side of the pool. Give it to Prisca. Under the hat there is a light switch for the pool. Switch it on. The light reveals the pendant at the bottom of the pool. Take it from the pool. Ask Sharon, the barmaid, for a coffee. Take a sugar and keep it. Drink your coffee and leave the pool. Now exit to QUL.

After that you can either attempt to work your own way through, or be lazy and wait until next month. ●

Connection to Miami and takes the role of a sexy supersonic flight captain!

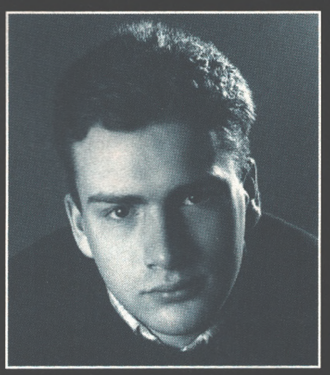
NATION

MYSTIFIED?

Then you need...

THE LAST RESORT

with Jonathan Davies



Stop toying with that electric carving knife, and let Jonathan Davies shine his guiding light in your direction.

New series! Vintage The Last Resort intros. This month: the classic 'Mothership' intro from issue 12.
'Is that mothership proving more troublesome than you'd anticipated? Have you just arrived at the Temple of Krall after days of journeying, only to find they won't let you in without a password? It's typical, isn't it? Well, that's where I come in (apparently). My appointed task is to take your problem and wrestle the solution from it with my bare hands, whatever the cost. Failing that, I'm placed in the humiliating position of having to pass your gaming dilemma over to the AMIGA POWER readership in the hope that they might know the answer (which they're bound to). Either way, you can't lose. Oh, and more fortunate readers might want to send in anything which they think might help.'

ULTIMA VI

Q "Where's the rune of honesty? The fortune-teller Penumbra tells me it was buried along with her husband Beyvin in the catacombs under Moonglow. I've searched all round Moonglow and Verity Isle, but I can't find an opening that might lead to the catacombs. Was she lying? Or am I looking in the wrong place?"
A Sperber, Waterloo, Belgium

A No, spake she the truth (as they say in this sort of game). The entrance to the catacombs lurks (inasmuch as an entrance can actually 'lurk') in the pantry of the tavern. You'll need to get the key from Manrel.

BATTLE HAWKS 1942

Q "I'm having trouble with the Midway No. 1 mission for the Japanese, when divebombers are attacking the three carriers. Although I can usually save the nearest flattop, the others have been hit before I reach them and thus I receive a poor mission rating. Is it really impossible? This is the only mission which I cannot complete successfully,

LOOSE ENDS

Here are all the problems that had me beat this month. If you know any of the answers, please send them in.

Q "I'm stuck on CAPTIVE, Mission 2, Level 2, the planet Phoopel. I can't find the generator room. I've come to a room which is cut in half by fire, but I can't find a way to the other side. Not of the clipboards I've got left fit, and I can't find any more."
Stephen A D

Q "How do you destroy the purple flower pot on the toys and stuff ledge in The Simpsons? And how do you destroy the cinema screen? I'd be delighted to know, as these are the only things holding me back from Level 2."
Cheryl Adamson, N Yorks

Q "I'm having problems with Shinobi. At the end of Level 2 a helicopter appears and I can't destroy it."
Daniel Brumhead (aged 9), Keyingham

Q "I'm having a number of problems with Legend. I can't answer the first riddle in the Unshrine. I don't see the significance of the Barkeep's rumour: 'Legend has it that the true Stone Masons were usurped by the Druids and now seek revenge.' And I'm stuck in a room on Level 1 of the Dark Tower. It's got a tree and an X symbol, and a level and chest that are blocked off by rising and falling spikes. The other door won't budge, and there's a green pressure pad I can't reach."
M Mancox, Brighton

Q "What's the probe code for Planet No. 5 (Salstee) in CAPTIVE?"
Ian Beckford, Jersey

Q "How do I get the passport in Leisure Suit Larry II? I have the ticket, the swim suit and the hair cut, but I still can't board the ship."
P Griffiths, Cambridge

Q "KID GLOVES 2 is easy till I get onto the mermaid at the end of the Water Islands. I've tried hundreds of times but it seems impossible to defeat her. As soon as I've hit her once she's back on top of me. What should I do?"
Adam Brumhead, Keyingham

Q "I recently bought MAGIC POCKETS for my children, but we always loose all our credits at the gorilla at the end of Level 2. How do you get past him?"
Mrs M Turner, Wednesbury

Tragically, I seem to run out of space once again. Like I said, do send in any problems you may be having and I'll do my best to answer them. And, if you can supply answers to any of this month's 'Loose Ends', please do so. The address is **The Last Resort, AMIGA POWER, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW.** And don't forget, as a precautionary measure, to mark your envelope Questions or Answers.

CASES CLOSED

Unresolved questions from previous months are tied up here, with the help of our more clued-up and generally together readers.

NEW ZEALAND STORY

Q Tom Lane of Twickenham hadn't progressed terribly far, having got stuck at the end of level 1-4.

A "To kill the whale, go to the bottom left of the screen and you'll get scooped into the whale's mouth. Dodge the raindrops falling from the ceiling, firing all the time, and you should manage to defeat it."
Helen Dryden, Guisborough

A "Or, even simpler, go up from the start, over the large wall and to the right. Go down to the bottom, get on a balloon and go up a little way alongside the wall. Keep firing a you'll be warped to level 2-1!"
Adrian Pannett, Shrewsbury

FUTURE WARS

Q Fyona Roberts of Dundee was wrestling unsuccessfully with that wretched octopus.

A "After the messages have cleared you will still be advancing towards the octopus. Click to stop yourself at a spot before the point where the back of the octopus's body begins. Now use the blowtorch on it. (the blowtorch is found at the bottom right of the ruins screen in 4315, under the rubble."
James Hampson, London

BARD'S TALE III

Q F Dees of Hull was locked out of the Lanatir's tomb.

A "The password is 'Cala'."
Janet Campbell, Taunton

A "The blowtorch needs to be filled at the tap in the sewers, by the way."
Jason Gemsor (aged 12), Farnborough

DAMOCLES

Q Andrew Burden of Warrington couldn't find keys A or C of the remote detonator, or the best way to complete the game.

A "To avoid destroying Damocles, get the antigrav from 09-02 (floor B), drive to 11-08, go to the basement (after picking up the ship) and warp to Transporter 2. Leave and go to 14-13 (you are now on Dion). Go to the window with a chair, a computer and a desk. Go right the way to the window and get the computer and chair. Drop and board the chair (it's possible to fly in it!) and you can now access the computer. Press 4 on the keypad, press the + key and then press * to destroy Icarus. Damocles should fly away safely.
Key C is on Metis 01-03 Ground Floor, and key A is through door A!"
Michael Hall, Pen-y-ffordd

CADAVER

Q Jack Daniels *(Huh? – Ed)* of Belfast had something missing from his life – a crown, to be precise.

A "You must have the king's armour, the helmet, the shield and the sword. From the armoury, go south and west and then push the button to get into the treasury."
Michael Hall, Pen-y-ffordd

BLACK CRYPT

Q The artifacts were Justin Wells of Surry's problem, or, rather, what to do with them.

A "Hopefully you have an invincibility potion; use it. Then have a quick slash at Estoroth and teleport away. Gather up any dead members and go in again. Use the right mouse button to activate the artifacts (which are now charged). Estoroth is now banished and you can collect your reward."
A J Perks, Arlesey

FIRST SAMURAI

Q Didier Wittesaele of Brussels couldn't move on from level eight. It turns out he's made a bit of a boob.

A "It's easy to make the mistake of jumping from the end of Level 6 to level eight. To avoid this, collect at least four 'cupid' items on level six to clear the manhole of blocks. Do not try to jump the barrels on the right. Smash through the manhole to get to the level six guardian. Continue underground for level seven and the guardian and you'll end up on level eight (just behind the barrels). You'll now be able to complete the level and exit to the next"
Lee Jones, Sevenoaks

HUNTER

Q Phillip Taylor of Haverhill was having trouble locating the bunker containing the General.

A "Destroy the prison with a few bazooka shots (or with any other powerful weapon). The bunker's entrance is concealed just under the jail. Inside the bunker you'll find someone who will claim not to be the General. He lies. Kill him, pick up his head and go back to your HQ as quickly as possible."

and it's driving me crazy!"
Stuart N Hardy, Sheffield

A Good.

HOOK

Q "How can I dig up the clock at the beach? How can I get the magnet?"
Mark Casey, Leeds

A To get the clock you'll actually need the magnet. that has to be bought."

ROBOCOP 3

Q "I gather there's a cheat which involves typing 'THE DIDDY MEN' at some point, but I can't get it to work."

A That's because you're actually supposed to type 'THE DIDY MEN' (with one D). Do it with the Shift key held down, and include the spaces. You'll then be invincible.

GOBLIIINS

Q "I'm stuck on level five. How do you get past the monster at the bottom of the screen, after you've let the skeleton out of the coffin?"
Jane Cole, Gateshead

A The level can be completed thus: cast a spell on the base of the hand, and then climb up and punch the eye. Move the technician onto the tongue and cast a spell on the skeleton sticking out of the coffin.

Move the magician onto the tongue with the technician, punch the eye and wait for the monster to return to the coffin. To finish the level, punch the toadstool.

SPEEDBALL 2

Q "Is there a cheat?"
Marcus Hammod, London

A Nope.
I'm afraid not.

OPERATION STEALTH

Q "I've got the key and card off the secret agent, but when I try to open the door leading to the safes nothing happens."
Tom Russell, Loughborough

A Use the card on the bank employee, who'll then open the safe room for you. (Much simpler, eh?) Then find the safe the corresponds to the number on the card, and open it with the key.

Not too good on the answering things front this month. All the more reason for you to get writing with all those hints, tips and solutions you've been keeping from me.

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THALION

The Future Entertainment Show

EARLS COURT

TIME FOR A QUICK TEST:

1. Think of just about any software company.
2. Now think about any game you've heard of.
3. Where can you go to find out everything you could want to know about the things you thought of in 1 and 2, from the people who know?

The answer is simple: The Future Entertainment Show at Earls Court in London from the 5th to the 8th of November. Hosted by your favourite magazine publisher (that's us) this all-formats extravaganza promises to be the biggest and brightest show ever. Anyone who's anyone in the computer industry will be there. Who knows, might even bump into one of the AMIGA POWER team as well. Here's a brief rundown of the whos, whats, whys and whens of the show.

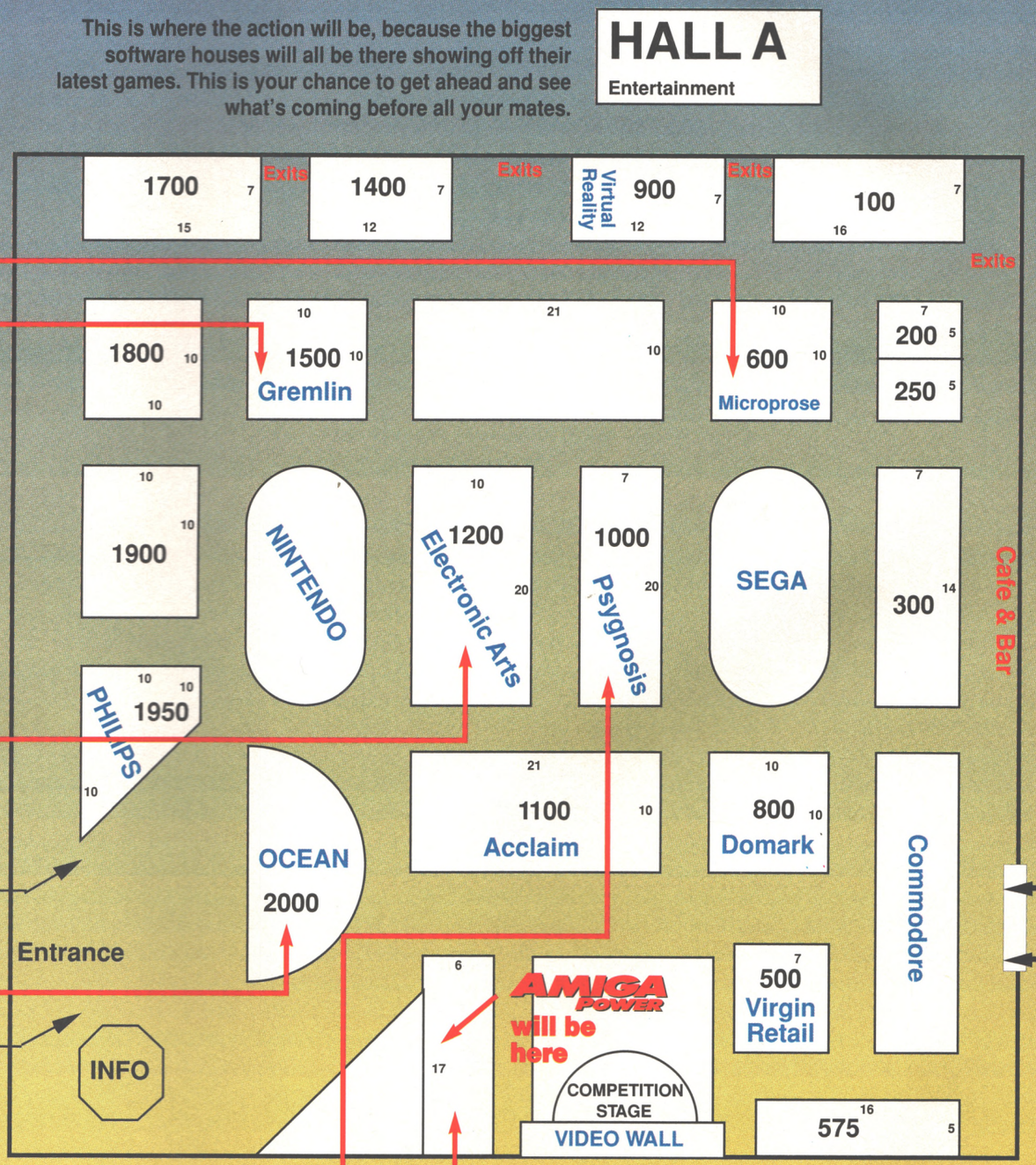
MicroProse, stand no 600, will be blowing people away with the latest state of the art sims for the Amiga and other machines. *Gunship 2000* is one title that'll be on show. Vektor Grafix's *B-17 Flying Fortress* should also be winging its way to Earls Court, but let's hope it doesn't bomb. *(You're fired. – Ed)*

Gremlin, stand no 1500, will be there supporting their latest batch of releases. *Nigel Mansell* is likely to feature heavily as his game nears completion, rather like his Formula One career. Gremlin must be more than a bit peeved that our Nige has opted to quit just as his game is ready, but that's the perils of licensing for you. *Hero Quest 2* is also likely to hack and slash its way into the show and no doubt *Lotus III* will be making an appearance somewhere along the line.

Electronic Arts, stand no 1200, should be the scene of some pretty neat stuff. *Road Rash* will be racing away with lots of the attention and don't be surprised if *Desert Strike* blows you away too.

Ocean, stand no 2000 - Need we say more? As you would expect, the Manchester giants will be showing off the latest film licences and a few other surprises. You'll be able to cop an eyeful of Cool World (the movie features a real and a cartoon Kim Basinger), but there'll be some games to see as well. Getting away from the movies, *Robosport* is likely to make an early appearance, but there's far too much to tell you about all of it here. Ocean's stand is bound to be one of the busiest, so be sure to get in there pretty early.

This is where the action will be, because the biggest software houses will all be there showing off their latest games. This is your chance to get ahead and see what's coming before all your mates.



Liverpool's very own Psygnosis, stand no 1000, will be pulling out all the stops at this year's FES. Little cute green creatures will no doubt be on everyone's minds as a certain sequel to a certain game draws ever closer. As featured on the cover disk this month, *Bill's Tomato Game* should prove to be too juicy to resist looking at. With the run-up to Christmas just starting, Psygnosis will be out to impress everyone.

Of course it wouldn't be the Future Show without the presence of the big boys of the magazine scene. Future Publishing have stand no 2300. You won't be able to miss it, it's one of the biggest there. Magazines in attendance will include AMIGA POWER, Amiga Format and Amiga Shopper among many others. In fact for the Amiga owner (and if you're reading this you probably are one) every magazine you would want to read about your machine is there, in person, as it were. What else do you need? Who knows, you may get the chance to challenge your favourite (or most hated) reviewer to a game on one of the stands.

T NOVEMBER 5-8

The Future Entertainment Show

ALL YOU NEED IS TICKETS

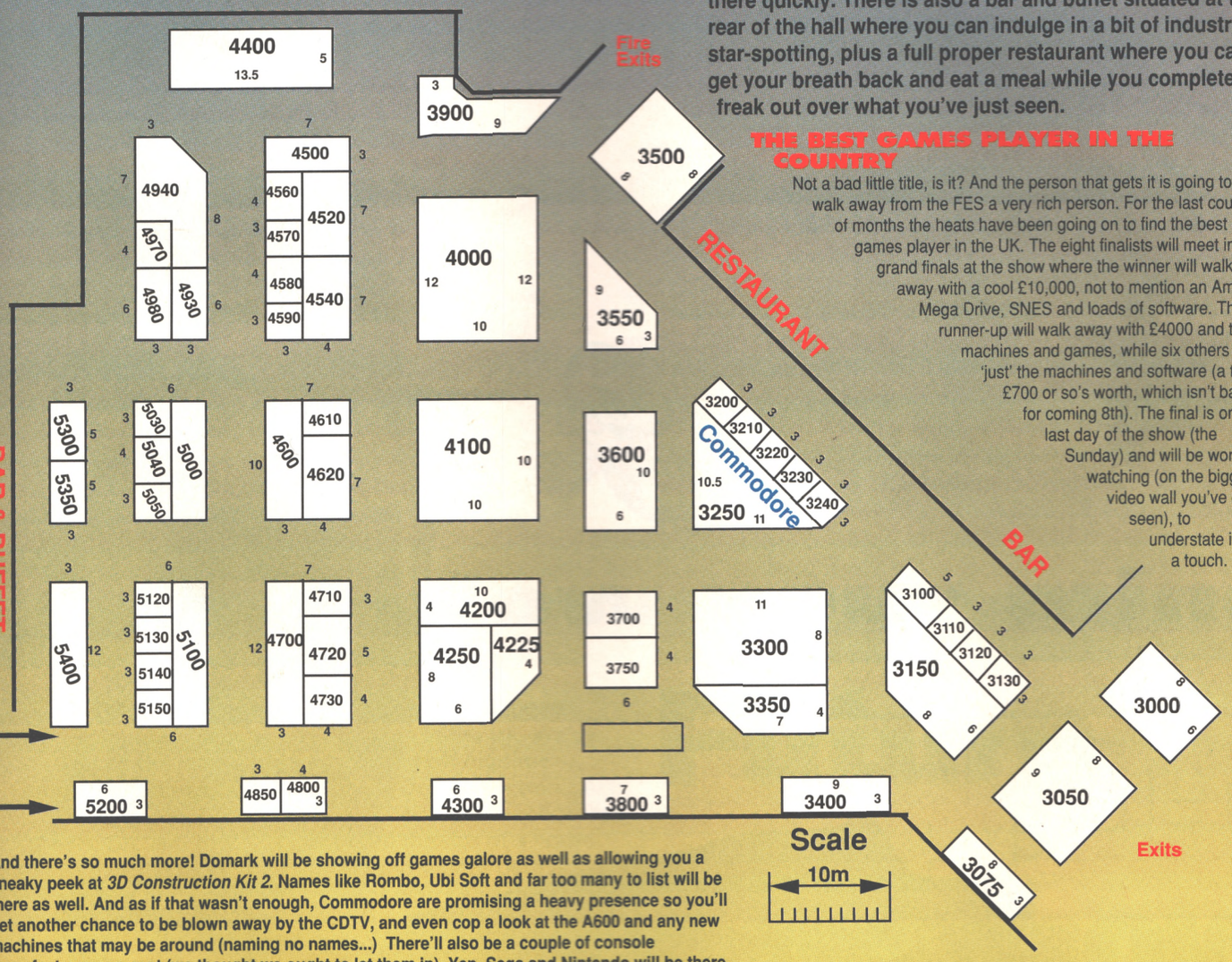
To save you looking round London trying to find where we are, the show is being held at Earls Court. If you want advance tickets there was a bit of card in the last issue giving you all the details. If not then tickets will be available on the door.

The doors open at 9.30am and close again at 5pm (or 4pm on Sunday because everyone wants to go home early on Sunday). Tickets on the door are £7 for adults and £5 for under 14s. (Of course, if you're smart enough to buy advance tickets, you'll have saved £1.05 on each ticket, so you'll be able to buy some crisps as well)

If you're planning to travel by tube then the nearest station (believe it or not) is Earls Court. Easy enough for you?

HALL B

Computing and Retail



In the B Hall there's going to be some big business going down and anyone looking for some bargains should look no further. This is going to be the place to be to pick up some cheap games and cheaper hardware. Bargain hunters will be gunning for all the best buys so get in there quickly. There is also a bar and buffet situated at the rear of the hall where you can indulge in a bit of industry star-spotting, plus a full proper restaurant where you can get your breath back and eat a meal while you completely freak out over what you've just seen.

THE BEST GAMES PLAYER IN THE COUNTRY

Not a bad little title, is it? And the person that gets it is going to walk away from the FES a very rich person. For the last couple of months the heats have been going on to find the best games player in the UK. The eight finalists will meet in the grand finals at the show where the winner will walk away with a cool £10,000, not to mention an Amiga, Mega Drive, SNES and loads of software. The runner-up will walk away with £4000 and the machines and games, while six others get 'just' the machines and software (a tidy £700 or so's worth, which isn't bad for coming 8th). The final is on the last day of the show (the Sunday) and will be worth watching (on the biggest video wall you've ever seen), to understate it just a touch.

And there's so much more! Domark will be showing off games galore as well as allowing you a sneaky peek at *3D Construction Kit 2*. Names like Rombo, Ubi Soft and far too many to list will be there as well. And as if that wasn't enough, Commodore are promising a heavy presence so you'll get another chance to be blown away by the CDTV, and even cop a look at the A600 and any new machines that may be around (naming no names...) There'll also be a couple of console manufacturers present (we thought we ought to let them in). Yep, Sega and Nintendo will be there too. If you're into games, how can you afford to miss it? Much as we hate blowing our own trumpets and name-dropping and all that stuff, it IS going to be the hottest ticket in town, in fact it's simply the biggest entertainment event of the year.

So now you know what it is, where it is and how little excuse you have not to be there. Make a date, November 5-8, be there or be laughed at by your friends for years to come. Be seeing you.

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It'll blow your mind

OK, here's the deal.

The Future Entertainment Show is the biggest computer games event ever seen in the UK. We've got all the leading names showing off big time – Commodore, Nintendo, Sega, Philips, Ocean, Electronic Arts, Acclaim, Psygnosis, Domark, Gremlin, Microprose and *scores* of others. Oh, and there's a video wall the size of a house and competitions and huge arcades and serious bargains and TV film crews and – but, hey, let's not worry about *detail*.

All you have to do is be there.

Then we'll blow your mind.

***Helluva* deal...**

The Future Entertainment Show

Earls Court November 5-8 1992

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To start with you have a choice of playing on the Mega Drive, Super NES or Amiga, but if you get through the first stage then you'll have to really show off your skills by playing several games on different machines.

If you get top marks in the special gamers' challenge you could make it to the finals at the Future Entertainment Show in November and face a play-off on the video wall with the TV cameras watching! And the winner will walk off with £10,000 in cash.

If you think you're up to the challenge, look up your nearest entry point below, and see if you are as good as you think you are...

THE PRIZES!

The winners of each heat will go forward to a regional final the same week. The winner of each regional final will get an **Amiga,** a **Mega Drive** and a **Super NES,** plus copies of the games which will be used in the finals so they can get ready in style. In the grand final itself, the runner up will get **£4,000** while the winner will go home an incredible **£10,000** richer!

FREE ENTRY!

HOW TO ENTER

Please pre-register the week before at your nearest store:

12th, 13th, 14th, 15th October
Glasgow Union Street Megastore
Falkirk Games Centre
East Kilbride Games Centre

19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd October
Stockport Game Centre
Manchester Megastore

26th, 27th, 28th, 29th October
Bromley Game Centre
Croydon Game Centre
Guildford Game Centre
Ilford Game Centre
Kingston Game Centre
London Game Centre, 100 Oxford Street
Birmingham Megastore
Bristol Game Centre
Cardiff Megastore
Newcastle Megastore
Gateshead Game Centre

There you'll have to try out a special timed challenge on Zool, Robocop 3 or Aquatics. Regional finals will be held on the Friday of each week in a local Megastore, and the winners of the regional finals will go to the grand final in Earls Court on November 7th and 8th.

THE NATIONAL COMPUTER GAMES CHAMPIONSHIPS

AMIGA POWER sponsored by Amiga Power and Virgin Retail in association with Bad Influence!

Virgin

MINDSCAPE – 'NOT JUST BY ACCIDENT'

Managing director Geoff Heath has been around precisely, oooh... ages. Let's just say that following a substantial period in the music biz he's now become something of a computer industry veteran too. A decade ago Geoff joined up-and-coming software company Melbourne House, who later merged with budget innovators Mastertronic, who in turn merged with Virgin, who themselves went on to launch the Sega consoles across Europe. Not bad experience for someone looking to found a little software empire of his own.

With the imminent release of the 'impossible to do' Amiga version of *Wing Commander*, the conversion of massive console platformer *Battletoads*, and their first ever in-house originated game, *Outlander*, we thought it was time to let Ronnie Randall pay a visit to Burgess Hill in Sussex, home of MINDSCAPE INTERNATIONAL.

WORK IN PROGRESS

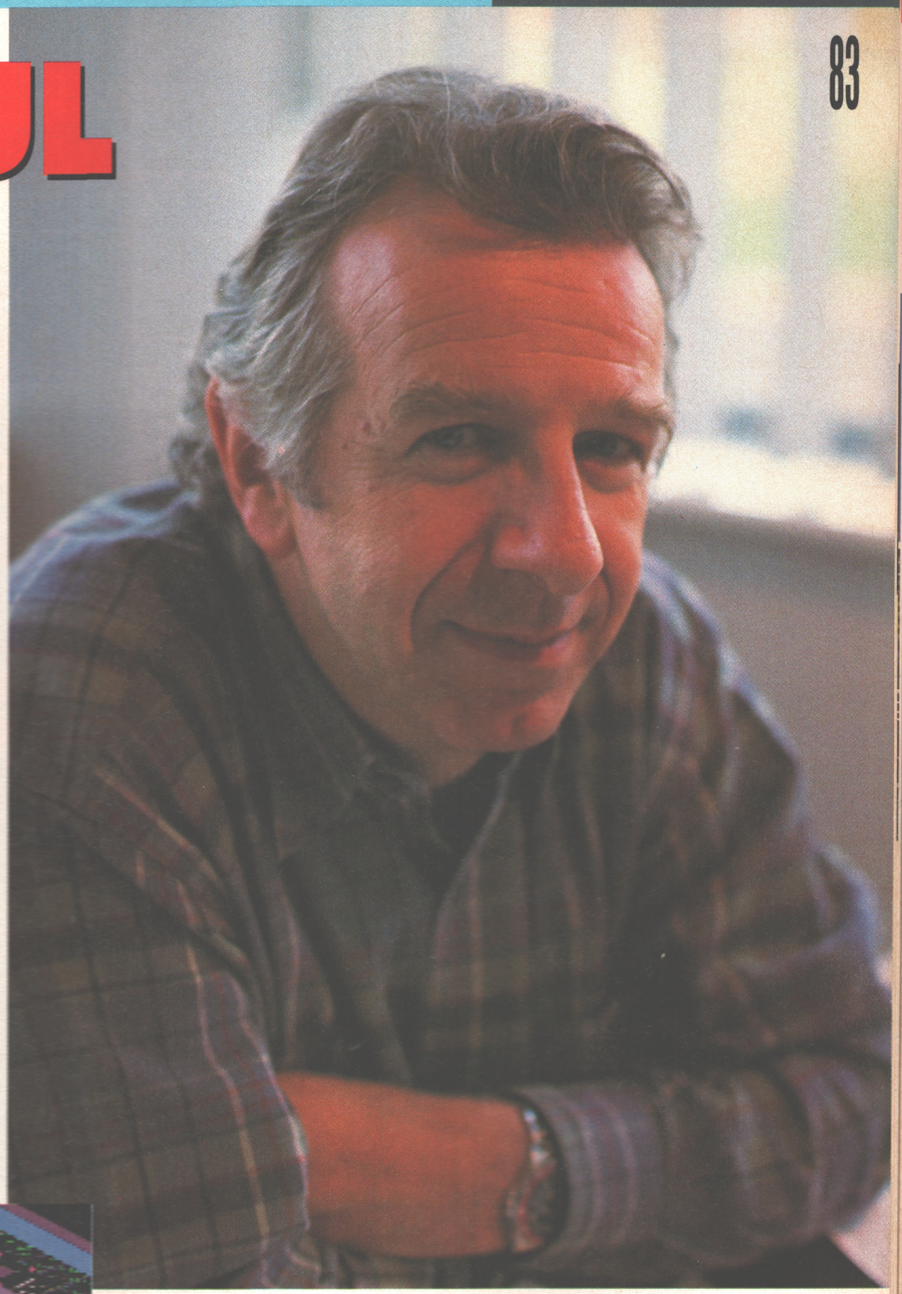
THE ORIGINS OF MINDSCAPE.

"We started just over three years ago by simply importing Mindscape Inc. products like *Balance Of Power* and *Deja Vu II* from the States. It was just two of us phoning around asking shops to stock the stuff. We wrote out about a million pounds worth of business on my dining room table during that first six months alone and realised we had a company that could go places. Mindscape Inc. wanted to set up in Europe so I was able to convince them to let me do it, gradually. We also picked up distribution for The Software Toolworks (now the Mindscape parent company) who produced all these strange products like *Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing*, and *Chessmaster*. Mindscape became known as THE company who proved that niche products could sell extremely well in Europe. Our strategy has always been to offer good, value for money programs with a long shelf life. The products may appear unusual, but they sell in mainstream volume."

MINDSCAPE HAS GROWN INCREDIBLY DURING A SEEMINGLY ENDLESS NATIONAL RECESSION.

The Mindscape in-house team from left to right: Patrick Baroni, Pog, Steve Lenney, Ian Faichnie, Paul Stevens, Steve Whittle, Jeff Gamon, Andy Kerridge, Richard Leinfellner, Mark Knight, and John Taylor.

UCCESSFUL



"True, it's been a great couple of years. In the terrible recession of the 1930s the boom areas were music halls and cinema, cheap escapism. Nothing really changes. When there is less disposable income people tend to look for relatively cheaper forms of entertainment, and in the '90s there's no better value than a GOOD computer game. Of course, we're not successful just by accident, we look at where the industry, AND the consumers, are going and we're probably unique for the UK in that we take orders, produce programs, manufacture, and distribute, all under one roof. There are over 70 employees here now, with French, German, and Japanese offices. Not bad for three years' work."

Right: Geoff Heath, Managing Director of Mindscape International. In the space of three years he's built up Mindscape to be one of the major players in the industry.

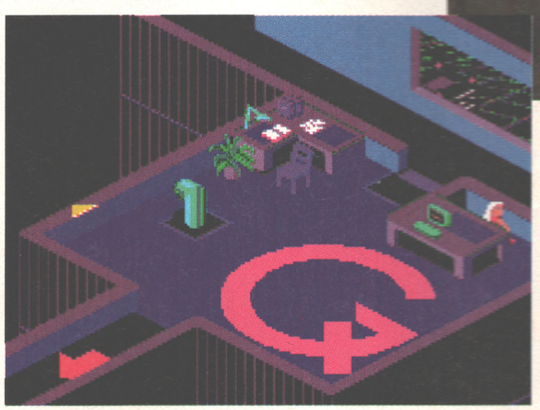
YOU SAY 'WE DON'T DO BUDGET GAMES' YET LAUNCHED THE NEW CLASSIC RANGE

"I think CDTV will take time to catch on"

"Our focus has always been quality. The new Classic series is priced at 14.99 with titles like *D/Generation*, *4D Sports Driving* and *Boxing*, *Blue Max*, *Das Boot*, *Captain Planet* and *Paperboy 2*. There's a budget price at which people know they're getting something either very old, or very inferior, sometimes both. At 7.99, or whatever, their expectations are not going to be too great. With 'Classics' we're offering really good value without compromising on quality. The response has been really encouraging, so we'll continue to look at products for that price point."

Below: The rather brilliant *D/Generation* is just one of the Mindscape titles getting a re-release at the unusual price point of £14.99.

NOW THAT ELECTRONIC ARTS HAVE PURCHASED ORIGIN HOW WILL MINDSCAPE REPLACE THE *ULTIMA* SERIES, AND INDEED, FUTURE *WING COMMANDERS*?



"Well, we've still got the rights to release new Origin product until next year. It's a blow, but nothing critical. We'll be looking at lines which in the past were considered to conflict with Origin releases. RPGs are a staple of the company and will always be successful for us.

"A new area we're really getting into is EDUTAINMENT, which basically means games you can actually learn something from as you play. Our new deal with Maxis very definitely falls under the edutainment category. It's a product range we understand, quality and shelf life crossing age and sex barriers. *Sim Life* is on the way, *Sim Farm* will follow, and there are lots of other *Sims* in the pipeline. The genre could go on for years.

"The other interesting area is Multi-Media, a hackneyed term I know, but I've always worked on the theory that the game, video, and music industries are on a collision course. I see what we're doing in future involving rock bands, musicians, and film. It's going to be a huge business. A while ago I rang up a few of my contemporaries from music biz days, thinking they wouldn't have a clue what I was talking about when I told them I produce computer games. Amazingly the typical response from these people at the top of the biggest record companies was 'don't tell me about the games business, I've got an Amiga, I've got a Gameboy, I've got a Mega Drive... I know what's going on.' Which means these people are showing an ACTIVE interest, and awareness."

ARE MINDSCAPE MAKING MOVES TO COMBINE THE VARIOUS STRANDS?

"Sure, we're dealing with music and film production companies to see how we can work together, but it's still very much at the talking stage. Currently there are at least two huge multinational companies actively backing the games business. Sony are one. Interestingly everything comes back to those little silver compact discs. They are, or will be, the common platform. Sooner or later a multi-media machine will arrive that allows you to play games, play music, and, once the compression techniques are refined, play films, with combinations of the three possible."

HOW DO YOU SEE THE NEAR FUTURE OF GAMING HARDWARE, THE AMIGA IN PARTICULAR?

"Primarily we support the Amiga, PC, Super Nintendo, Sega, and Macintosh. At the moment the Mac has the biggest growth potential of all, THAT market is starting to become very interesting indeed. I think the Amiga has a good future. The various souped-up new versions like the 4000 are very impressive with faster speeds and 256 colour display. Once CD drive consumption takes off it will encourage better software. All the hardware manufacturers are now involved in CD developments, which, as far as we're concerned, is the way the whole industry should be going. I actually went to a couple of car boot sales at the weekend and, to my horror, saw some of our best and most recent products being sold on pirated blank disks for £2.50. I *guess* that in future new Amigas will use CD rather than floppy storage systems in order to eliminate a lot of these problems and thus keep us interested in developing software for the machines." →

long the first fruits of our labours are only now beginning to show. It takes time to nurture and blend talent. For example, Origin didn't happen overnight, they've been around for ten years. The Americans have led the field in the RPG genre so far, but notable British companies now fully understand these sort of products and are producing world standard software. Bullfrog are a case in point, while the Bitmaps at Renegade probably produce the finest games of THEIR particular type anywhere in the world, the Americans can't touch them. We're now looking to create in-house product that rivals anything seen anywhere, but it's not an overnight job."

"Wing Commander: The Amiga potential is huge"

...AND FINALLY 'THE MIRACLE', WHAT IS IT?

"The Miracle is a brilliant way to learn to play the piano. Research discovered that a mind-boggling 60% of the population in all countries and of ALL age groups would like to play keyboards, so we looked at the *Mavis Beacon Typing Tutor* with its artificial intelligence, and entertaining approach to teaching and basically expanded the idea massively to create a piano tutoring system complete with keyboard. The Miracle isn't a huge fly-off-the-shelf product, learning to play the piano isn't a fad like that, but it's an innovative idea that's proving to be a big success, and very typical of the sort of direction Mindscape will continue to take in future."

Well that's enough of all that Mindscape propaganda Geoff, it all sounds TOO perfect if you ask me. Let's see if we can dig up some dirt down in the programmers' lair.

BUT YOU'RE NOT SUPPORTING THE CDTV YET.

"As I keep saying, the future is definitely CD in some form. We're only doing a small amount of CDTV product because we don't feel that the software currently available utilises the full potential of the machine yet. I think CDTV, though way ahead of anything else on the market, will take time to catch on. At the moment people don't realise what it can do, they're saying; 'Why bother? I can get all I want on an Amiga.' Once software that really USES the CDTV is developed people will wonder how they lived without it. The Amiga itself would have been doomed without the arrival of a few key pieces of software that proved its potential and fired the public imagination. *Shadow of the Beast* was one, just like *Wing Commander* sold PCs."

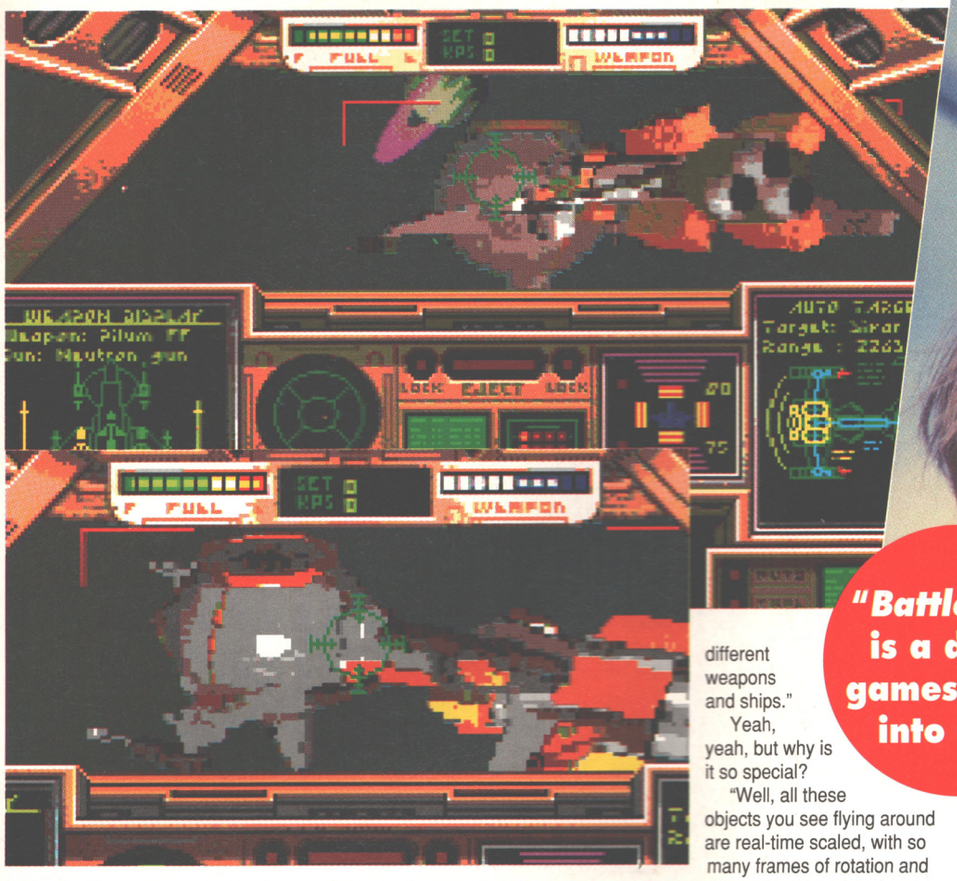
FUNNY YOU SHOULD MENTION *WING COMMANDER*...

"It's wonderful, in terms of personal gaming it's my thing. Our concern at the time of its release two years ago was that we believed the type of PCs needed to REALLY show it off to its true potential were extremely limited in numbers. However, what happened is that the game helped to revolutionise the sale of PCs. People bought better graphics cards and bigger disc drives, even better PCs, JUST to play *Wing Commander*. The Amiga potential is huge too, after several failed attempts at conversions in the past we finally got this technique that works. It's VERY exciting."

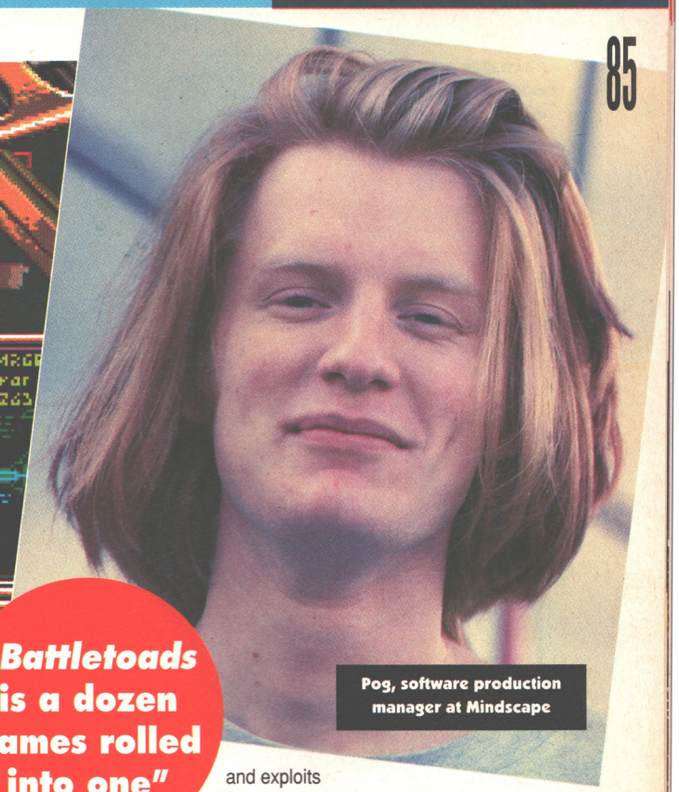
SO FAR YOU'VE LICENSED PRODUCT, OR ACTED AS SALESMAN AND DISTRIBUTOR FOR THE LIKES OF RENEGADE. THE IN-HOUSE DEVELOPMENT OF *OUTLANDER* IS A NEW DEPARTURE.

"The key to good software development is that it's a three year plan. Since we've only been around for that

The Miracle – at last, a keyboard which lets you tinkle with the ivories and helps you learn music at the same time!



Wing Commander **in all its 3D glory. On the lower picture we're flying straight at an enemy transport craft in** *Wing Commander*. **The trick is to shoot up its engine port.**



Pog, software production manager at Mindscape

"*Battletoads* is a dozen games rolled into one"

THE SEX DUNGEON

"Hold it right there Ronnie, first stop I'm taking you to our Sex Dungeon," breathed Claudine Jorris who's big in marketing around these parts. A-ha, just as I feared, marketing PAYOLA! But I won't crack. 'Truth, justice and the Wembley Way' that's my motto.

I'm guided through a maze of offices and into a massive warehouse space stacked to the rafters with Euro-butter mountains worth of computer product. In the far corner a huge truck with TNT writ large on the side backs through a hole in the wall – another pile of games off to Mr Software Retailer.

"Here it is, look... the Sex Dungeon."

A cheap formica door swings open to reveal five or six gaunt, pallid-skinned blokes playing computer games.

"The Sex Dungeon is just a little joke amongst the females," cackles Claudine, a touch TOO bitchily for my liking. "It's really our Quality Assurance and play-testing department. Have fun." And with that she turned on her heel and abandoned me.

WING COMMANDER AND ALL THAT

"Hi! I'm Pog, I'm a software production manager. Would you like to see *Wing Commander*?"

Oo-er! Yes please mister. What's it all about then?

"It's a 3-D space shoot-em-up. You fly on 32 missions against an alien invasion force, stop them, kill them, capture their leaders... it's basically air to air combat with lots of different weapons and ships."

Yeah, yeah, but why is it so special?

"Well, all these objects you see flying around are real-time scaled, with so many frames of rotation and different angles already stored. It's an unusual combination for the Amiga which normally uses vector graphics for flight combat sims. The alien ships are actually bitmapped graphics with real textures."

Oooo! My head hurts. All this technical jargon is fine, but does it mean the game is any good?

"Are you kidding, *Wing Commander* is THE classic on the PC. It's NOT a linear game, you take different routes depending upon how well you carry out each mission. You can fight badly, yet still come back on track with a series of later successes. In fact you could actually survive through to the end of the game but lose because your ineptitude has allowed the invasion force to reach your mothership. Alternatively, do well and you'll be attacking their mothership instead. Intermission sequences keep you up to date with other, related action during the battle you're involved in. Your personal actions and exploits affect every other aspe..."

Alright already, I get the picture, it's well thought out, complex, yet easy to get into. Who solved those tough Amiga conversion problems?

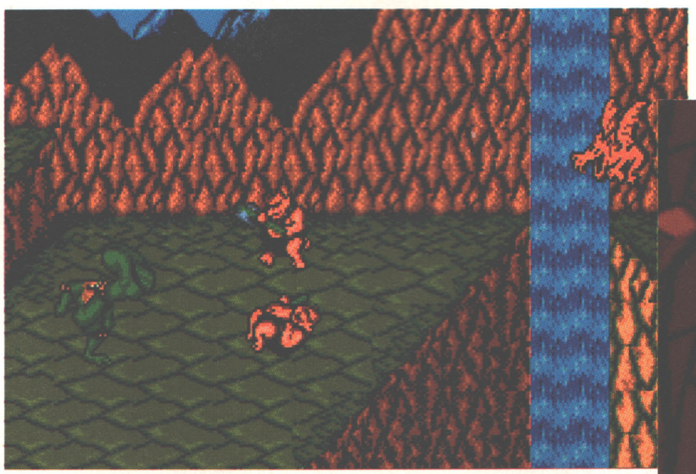
"Nik Pelling. He proved with some demos that he could make things happen that we, and everybody else, believed impossible on this machine. Thank him for bringing *Wing Commander* to the Amiga, it's extremely clever work."

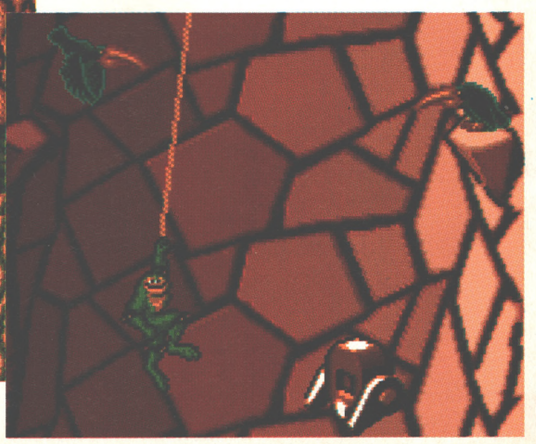
BATTLETOADS – WARTS AND ALL

"Wanna see *Battletoads*? Well you can't, we're too busy converting it, still, here's a video recording of what it does. It's definitely the best game of its type, with rave reviews on the consoles. Mindscape aren't known for platform games, that's more Renegade territory, but our view is, if you can get the best, take it.

"*Battletoads* is immense, with so many ideas. During the conversions the subtlety of the game has dawned upon us even more. There are120 frames of animation on the toad alone, and each of the 12 levels is so different from the last it's like a dozen individual games rolled into one. Own *Battletoads* and you'll never need another platform game."

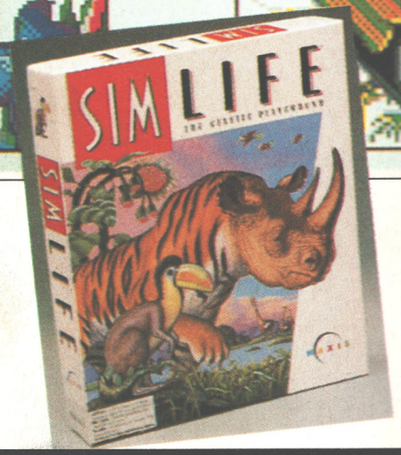
Surprisingly, studying the video, everything he says appears to be true. *Battletoads* really promises to be something extra special. If only I could play it. Reluctantly I settle instead for a run down of near-future releases. ➔





Battletoads **as it stands on the PC at the moment. Each level offers a new challenge for the toads, and features new gameplay elements.**

Sim City? Pah! _Sim Ant_? Small fry! _Sim Life_ goes all the way, giving the player control over entire civilisation. Perhaps the ultimate sim game, the potential is huge. Of course there is the danger that, like _Sim Earth_, _Sim Life_ could over-reach itself and end up a sprawling mess. Here's hoping for a return to the classic playability of _Sim City_.



started life as a license for the Mad Max films. We've dropped the Max tie-in because of the associated limitations of a licensed product, but the inspiration is still very much drawn from the first two Mad Max films."

Inspired in precisely what way?

"There's a car driving sequence, moving from town to town along desert highways while bikers throw Molotov cocktails, jeeps crash into you, and microlight aircraft drop bombs. The rough spec is a-kidnapped-scientist-needing-to-be-rescued-in-order-for-him-to-prevent-something-awful-happening. It's a mixture of third person sexy driving sequences and a good old horizontal scrolling beat-'em-up."

I'm shown an impressive animation, taken straight off the film, of a guy flying over the top of a car after being mown down by Max, sorry Outlander, and the general graphic style is rather gorgeous, but at the moment there's nothing to actually *play* as yet.

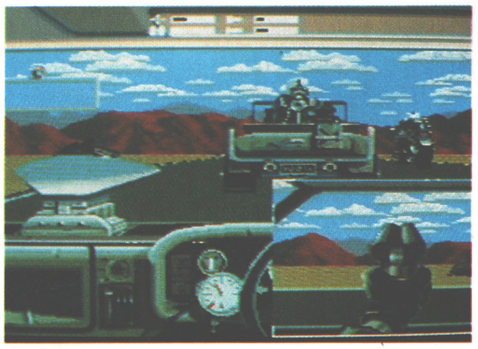
AS MAD AS A VERY MAX THING

The programming room is loud, very loud. Nine Inch Nails loud to be precise. The windows are plastered with posters of Nirvana, The Shamen, The Smiths and The Orb to keep out some light. In this intimidating semi-dark pit I can make out seven more geezers hunched like goblins over their colour monitors. Maybe THIS atmosphere is the secret of success for a company founded on the legends of Middle Earth? Except that today everyone's working on *Outlander*, a future driving/beat-em-up game.

"*Outlander* is our first in-house originated project and

TAKE TWO BOTTLES INTO THE SHOWER?

"Over the next few months the Amiga will see *Wing Commander*, *Battletoads*, and *Outlander*. The Bitmaps' best ever, *The Chaos Engine* is coming out on Renegade, very slick indeed. Tony Crowther is beavering away on *Captive II*, though it's a little way off yet, and add on disks for *Legend* are a strong possibility.



Right: The 3D section of _Outlander_ definitely evokes Mad Max. Far right: Beating 'em up in _Outlander_ .

THAT DEDICATED AND HARDWORKING MINDSCAPE IN-HOUSE PROGRAMMING TEAM IN FULL.

Steve Lenney and John Taylor in 'serious programmers' pose

Andy Kerridge, coding on *Outlander* and *Battletoads*

Paul Stevens graphic artist on *Outlander*

Jeff Gamon, lead programmer on the in-house game *Outlander*

"Tony Crowther is beavering away on *Captive 2*"

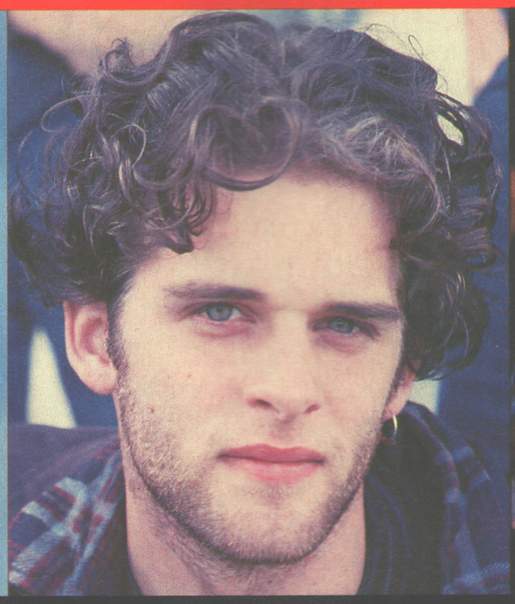
The on-going plan is to bring as much programming in-house as possible, so we're constantly adding coders and artists. We've just taken on our first full time musician too, Mark Knight. He working on Amiga *Wing Commander*.

"And, of course, we've got *Contraptions* – a puzzling sort of affair. Then there're the *Sim* games from Maxis, of course. Then then of course there's...ah, but we've run out of time."

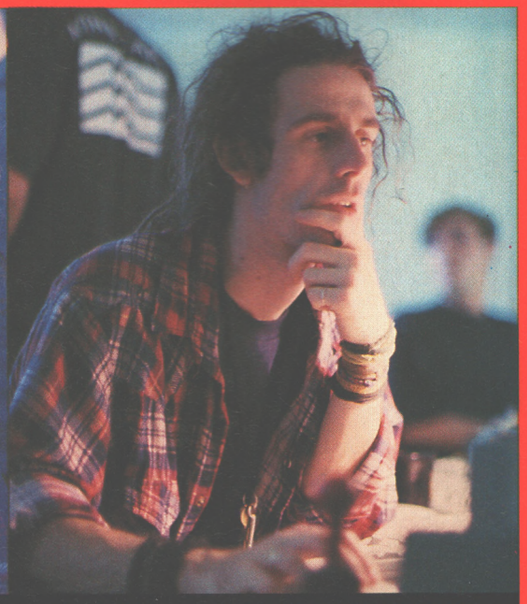
And, indeed we have. I guess you'll just have to wait until another time, to discover the dark and wonderful secrets Mindscape have planned for the future. ●

NEXT STOP: THE MAD MAX-ESQUE OUTLANDER, AND THEN CONSOLE SMASH HIT BATTLETOADS

CD Rom programmer Patrick Baroni



Steve Lenney – senior graphic artist



Ian Faichnie, currently graphic artist on *Battletoads*

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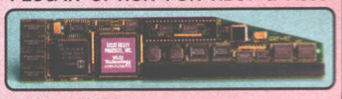
PLUG-IN OPTION FOR HD8+ & A530



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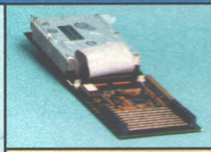
Price	**£599**	**£999**	**£1399**	**£1699**

All GVP G-Force accelerators can be turned into a hard card by adding a Mount Kit, GVA 4251, £39.95, making it the ULTIMATE Amiga 1500/2000 peripheral. Any 1" drive can then be mounted on to the accelerator.



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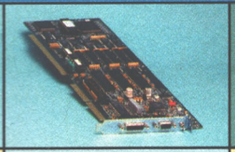

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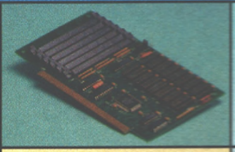

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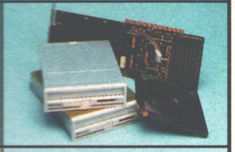

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LOCOMOTION

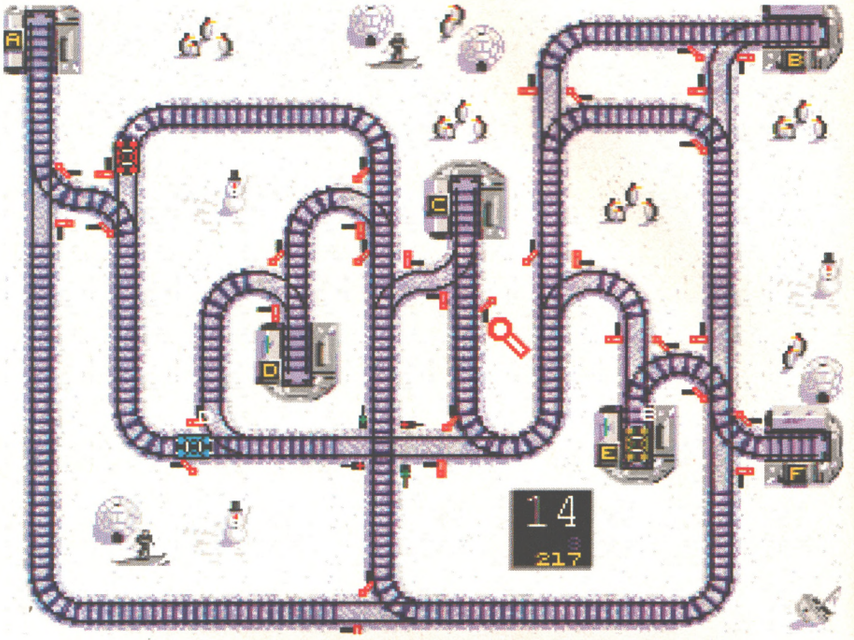
kick off our new look full-price section with this bizarre train-based puzzler.

Welcome back to the reviews, where we

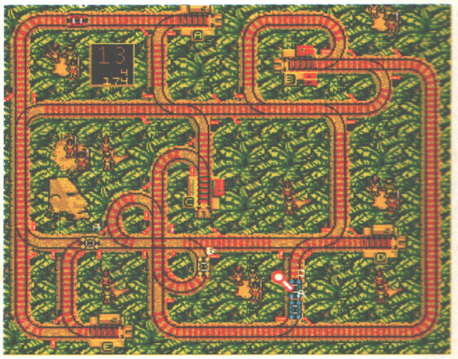
Game: Locomotion
Publisher: DMI
Authors: Andre Wuethrich, Harald Kuhn (graphics)
Price: £25.99
Release: November

You should already be pretty familiar with this game from our issue 16 coverdisk, but if you're not – well, it serves you right for not buying it. Ha.

Locomotion is a puzzle game in the same sense that *Tetris* is a puzzle game, ie it's not. Your job in both is to react to a set of random but unalterable Incidents by manipulating a number of given Variables in such a way as to effect a 'Solution' which enables you to continue until Disaster inevitably overtakes you. In the case of *Locomotion*, the Incidents are trains appearing from stations on a map, with a letter above them indicating the destination to which they have to be sent. The Variables are the sets of points scattered all around the maze-like layout of railway tracks which make up each level. The Solution is getting a given number of trains into their correct stations, by manipulating the points to guide them safely around, within a time limit and within a set maximum number of crashes, and Disaster rears its head when you run out of time or trains before successfully parking the required number. Like *Tetris*, it's a very simple concept (even Tim managed to pick it up in a matter of seconds) *(What do you mean, 'even Tim'? – Tim)*, and like *Tetris* it very quickly gets overwhelmingly nasty. In *Locomotion* this happens when the track layouts get more complicated (or, paradoxically, simpler, which means you've got a lot less space to manoeuvre in), the trains appear more frequently and the parameters for survival get more and more demanding (ie more trains to direct in less time). Very soon indeed, you're looking at something that's deeply scary and enough to put you off travelling by train for life...



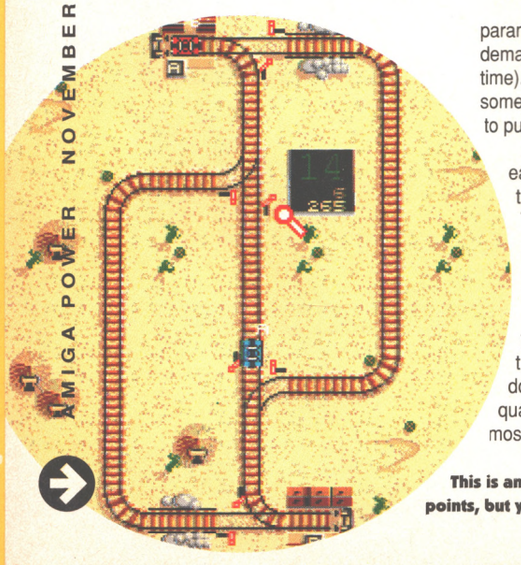
Where there isn't any track, trains don't derail, they just sit and wait. But with the way the time limits are, don't have them hanging around too long.



Why don't they have any complex rail networks in the jungle? Because there isn't the demand.

We apologise for that last caption, by the way. Bit of a private joke. It won't happen again.

As you can see, later levels don't necessarily mean more complicated levels, but there's no room for error here.



This is an extremely busy level – only four points, but you'll never be off them.

Locomotion comes with 12 stages, each of which has 9 levels to get through before you get the password. There are also 12 slots into which you can save the stages you can create with the aid of the built-in track editor.

Don't think that this means you're in for an easy ride, though – this isn't one of those games that doesn't start getting difficult until three-quarters of the way through. In fact, most of us started getting flustered and panicky by around the fourth level of stage one. Actually, this is the game's biggest failing – it gets off-puttingly hard so quickly that you're in danger of getting fed-up and discouraged before you get to the reward and boost of a level password. It Is worth persevering, though – later levels bring on different scenery, and interesting and bizarre layouts which really tax your mind's sense of co-ordination to the limits.

Super-careful and painstakingly thought-out manipulation of the controls will be required, and all against oppressive time limits which will have you quivering under your desk in submission as your brain slams itself against the insides of your skull in a desperate attempt to escape.

Locomotion is one of those rare things – a game that the entire family can play. Sure, that's partly because it's easy to grasp and it's got granny-friendly subject matter, but mostly it's because most people hate most of their relatives. Got a really nasty auntie? Give her a go of *Locomotion* and watch her go dribbling-mad-bonkers before your very eyes.

● ***STUART CAMPBELL***

THE BOTTOM LINE

A brilliant game that'll test your powers of tactical thinking and mental organisation better than just about anything else. Absorbing and addictive, just excellent, basically. It does get repetitive, though – there are just too many levels to each world. Still, with a built-in construction kit, you don't ever need to be bored.

84 PERCENT

TREASURES OF THE SAVAGE FRONTIER

After the likes of Eye Of *The Beholder 2*, is there really any need for games like this?

Now *this* is the wild frontier. How about it babe, wanna go treasure hunting?

Game: Treasures of the Savage Frontier
Publisher: US Gold/SSI
Authors: Mark Buchignani, Don Baglow, Linwood Taylor
Price: £32.99
Release: Out Now

Shock, horror. Yet another mediocre RPG lands on my desk. Do these people really think I have nothing better to do with my time?

Look back over the last six or seven issues and you will see some truly awesome RPGs. *Legend*, *Ishar*, *Storm Master*, *Eye Of The Beholder II*, they've got it all – great graphics, good sound and most importantly, instant playability. Even more importantly this playability lasts throughout the game keeping you coming back time and time again. Now let's see what *Treasure Of The Savage Frontier* has, shall we? Great graphics? Nope. Good sound? Nope. Okay so it has playability factor, yes? No.

The first thing that will strike you about *Treasure* is the amount of disk swapping and accessing that goes on. Just to load the options screen takes three or four swaps and heaven forbid if you want to do anything clever on this screen or even in the game. If ever a game was designed to wear your disk drive out then this is it. It takes forever to set up a party and actually get into the game, I know that RPG fans are used to this but they shouldn't have to be. Nothing ever needs to be this unfriendly.

Some of the characters have nice close ups, there I did it, I found something about the game that I liked.

The guy's a square. Dani the spellcaster casts a spell in the middle of combat. Not the lush scenery, by the way.

Everyone knows that SSI have a great reputation for producing some of the best role-players around. It's just such a pity that they haven't caught up with the times yet and realised that you can have good graphics in a role playing game. In the old days people didn't expect much in the way of aesthetics, but it's been proved that it can be done. Take a look at *Dungeon Master* and the *Eye Of The Beholder* games if you don't believe me. The graphic style used in *Treasures* is out of date and looks it. They are simplistic in the extreme and occupy such a small area of the screen.

Speed is another thing that lets the game down badly. As if all that disk swapping wasn't enough, just moving around the play area takes ages. After a while it seems that just about every move has to be loaded in separately and if you happen to come across some creatures you want to fight then be prepared for some major swapping hassles, both before and after the event. While we're on the subject of fighting, the combat is just about as exciting as watching paint dry, but it's a close contest. This D&D system has had its day, it's time for something new.

How can I put this without upsetting old-fashioned RPG fans? Don't buy this. There are so many excellent role playing games out there that this one should be left to fade away into the background while the real things take centre stage. An outdated waste of time, and effort.

● *LES ELLIS*

Locked in mortal combat. A giant, a couple of dwarves, a wizard, a ninja and, wait for it, a tree. What a plank. Maybe he's branching out. *(Maybe you're fired. -Ed)*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Treasures of the Savage Frontier just goes to show that even if you have a tried and tested formula, it'll eventually go stale. It's just a very bad RPG. Go for one of the many excellent games out there instead.

34 PERCENT

RED ZONE

Bang. A new bike-crash simulator from Psygnosis.

Brrrrmmm. Smash.

Game: Red Zone
Publisher: Psygnosis
Author: Dan Gallagher
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

Picture the scene: It was a Monday morning. I arrived back in the office after two weeks' holiday. Mark said, "Did you have a nice time?" I told him I did. "We've got a present for you," he said, and gave me a big black Psygnosis box with a picture of a motorbike on the front. "We thought you'd like to review this," he said with an editorial twinkle in his eye. I was touched – they'd saved this motorbike game review for me because of my new-found interest in motorbikes.

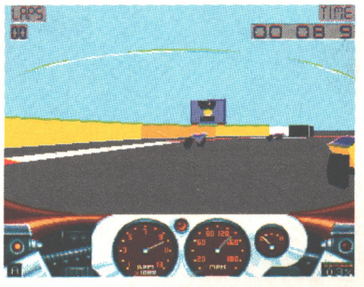
"We saved this motorbike game review for you because no one except the PR bloke from Psygnosis can keep the bike on the track for long enough to complete a race..." And lo and be jiggered, neither could I. But persistence, as the saying goes, is... er... well it's jolly important anyway. So I stuck at it, and pretty soon I was actually able to get all the way round a course without destroying the bike. Within only half a day or so, I managed to qualify for a real race.

Red Zone is one of those polygon 3D affairs where you blast round a Grand Prix circuit as fast as you possibly can, if not faster. Because you're on a motorbike, your view occasionally tilts at bizarrely improbable angles as you bank the bike to 'take corners' (although in *Red Zone*, the phrase 'to take a corner' really ought to be redefined as 'to crash into a barrier in the most irritating way you can think of').

"Smooth is not a word that would be used to describe it"

You can choose either a first or second person view and, when you first start playing, the second person view, where you can see your own bike, is the most useful. It gives you something of an idea of what happens as you ricochet around and lets you get to grips with controlling the bike a bit better. It's pretty difficult to judge distances, though, so you tend to hit the barriers even more frequently than usual and it's not really that much use for actual racing. So when you've got the hang of it you move back to the first person view. For reasons that are never adequately explored you can also choose side and rear views (when a bike's this difficult to control, why would you ever want to not look where you're going?).

When you finally manage to finish a race, you can watch a replay of it as seen from a helicopter. This really brings home the absurdly difficult control as you watch your bike slew wildly around the track looking for the 'racing line' into the next crash barrier. And in case that wasn't enough evidence, you also get statistics on how many times you hit the barrier and how many other riders you endangered. (I was so good that I managed to endanger up to 11, even when there were only five other riders in the race.)



Here's a funny thing. The dial on the left is the tachometer. It doesn't have a red zone.

Not a bad race, really. Only two crashes and four other riders endangered.

It's very difficult to control, but with a bit of practice it does become slightly easier. But is it worth the effort? Well, no, frankly. 'Smooth' is not a word that would be used to describe the animation nor would anyone be very likely to say 'extremely attractive' when asked to describe the backgrounds. The backgrounds can be pepped up by adding all the extra detail offered on the options screen, and this does help to make the whole thing much nicer to look at. But at a price. The animation moves from 'not very smooth' to 'very jerky and slow indeed' and you soon eschew scenery in favour of a bit of oomph. Doubtless there are some really great pictures of you when you win the championship (the one of you in bandages when you've written the bike off and been retired from the race is quite amusing) but I can't imagine very many people putting in the effort required to get that far.

It certainly isn't rubbish, don't get me wrong. Unfortunately, though, it isn't very easy, it isn't huge amounts of fun to play and it doesn't look utterly brilliant. I didn't expect to be World Champion first time out, but I wouldn't mind not crashing at every corner and I wouldn't mind if the corners looked pretty when I hit them.

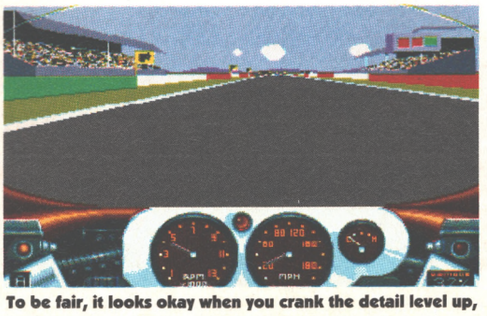
● *TIM NORRIS*

THE BOTTOM LINE

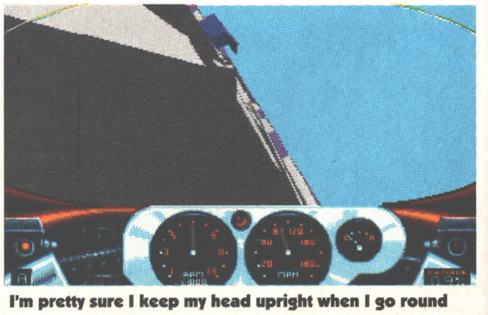
Controlling a bike is a very physical thing and so it was inevitable that the control would be tricky to simulate. But smooth graphics are something we've come to expect and a miss here is slightly more significant.

54 PERCENT

Action replay. That green and blue thing in the middle, at right angles to the track, is me on my way to the finish line.



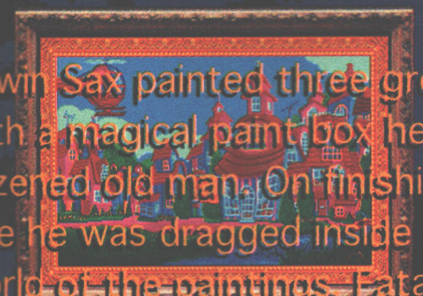
To be fair, it looks okay when you crank the detail level up, but it reacts so slowly you'll never finish without crashing.



I'm pretty sure I keep my head upright when I go round corners so that the world never looks quite this crooked.

ICE

Edwin Sax painted three great masterpieces with a magical paint box he aquired from a wizened old man. On finishing the last one he was dragged inside the bizarre world of the paintings. Fatal Strokes is the story of his escape.



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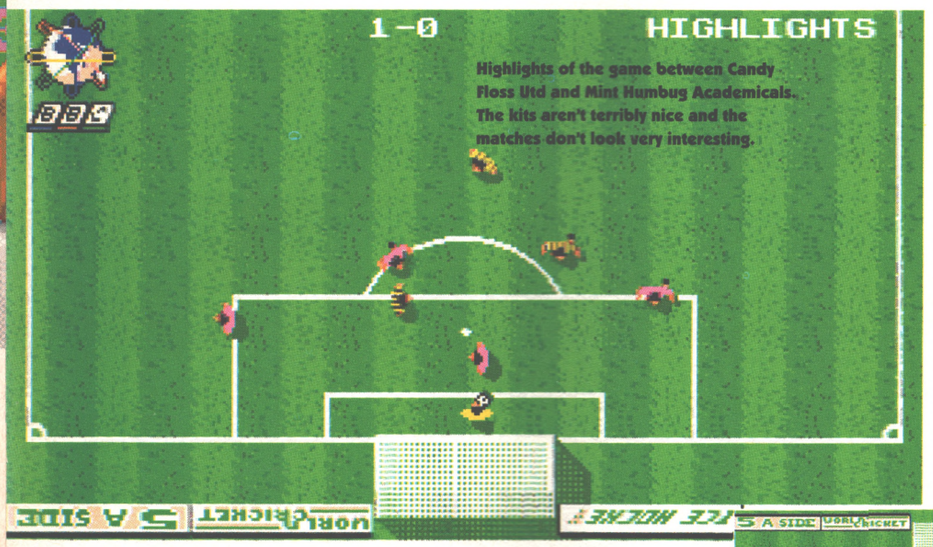
MATCH OF THE DAY



Publisher: Zeppelin (Premier)
Price: £25.99
Author: David Sowerby, Gareth Briggs, Neil Hislop and friends
Release: Out now

When the menu screen first appears your immediate inclination is to leap out of your chair and shout "hurrah, an icon-ed menu system!" This would be a big mistake. Partly because you might bump your head on the ceiling, thereby sustaining injury – Zeppelin are not liable for any medical costs incurred as a result of such an accident – but mainly because this isn't really an icon-driven menu system type game state of affairs. In fact it's something altogether more innovative, which soon becomes quite irritating.

You don't click on the icons to enter the different sub-menus, instead you have to drag the icons over to the holes in your diary. There's an awful lot of selecting and dragging of icons to be done, and while this might be quite realistic (allowing you to build your plan for a week in advance) it's pointless. 99.93% of time you're only going to be pulling over an icon for what you want to do next. That means selecting the icon, dragging the icon, placing the icon, then clicking on the 'next appointment' arrow. Instead of just clicking straight on the icon like you would in most other management games.

This sounds like a lot of moaning about very little, but the worst sin a footie management game can commit is having a user interface that gets on your nerves. And speaking of getting on your nerves, the game features Jimmy Hill in a 'Match of the Day studio' graphic interlude with inane half-time waffle. They're not doing themselves any favours here, are they?

What else? A transfer market so stagnant that you'll be looking at lists of no-one for ages, straining at the leash with loads of money in the bank. A 'training' facility so fiddly that you're better off fielding a team of donkeys and losing than even bothering with it. Match highlights that are too fast, predictable, unrealistic and, well, crap (like, every single team appears to play in a vertically-striped strip in colours chosen by a colour blind sadist) to build up much excitement. Oh dear, it's not going very well is it?

Match of the Day isn't as bad as footy management games can be, but neither is it fit to grace the same pitch as, say, *Graham Taylor's Soccer Manager*. It's simply too fiddly and lacking in action, and you need to work far too hard to actually get anywhere.

And of course, any feelings of 'fun' that might start to emerge soon vanish when Jimmy Hill's infamous mug returns to the screen. Yeuck.

● *ADAM PETERS*

Everyone's favourite football commentator – John Motson.

"I think the referee made a bad decision here, Des." "Frankly, Jimmy, I couldn't care less what you think."

THE BOTTOM LINE

A mediocre management sim, with a few good ideas and a whole lot of bad ones. If you're the sort of person who automatically doesn't trust full price releases from budget houses, this game could surprise you a little bit. But not much.

51 PERCENT

Make your team selections based on the players' notes on the clipboard.

COME ON YOU ICONS

Supporters Club. Become the only football manager in the world to listen to what the supporters think. They'll tell you who their favourite players are, and that's it.

Highlights. Click on this to switch between 'highlights on' and 'highlights off' mode. Highlights off? Coward.

Physio. Find out which prima donna has strained their groin down the local nightclub this week.

Dealing. Fancy buying and selling players? You wish. It does start happening eventually.

Trainer. Irritating moving around of little icons time. Which three players do you want to put through the ropes today?

Team Selection.

Team Talk. Give a dressing down to a player you don't like, and a dressing gown to a player you do like (probably).

Sportspages. Not the excellent bookshop, but the underside of the local paper. Occasional news, regular fixtures guide.

Scout. Another overpaid crook who does very little very badly. He's supposed to look for players you can buy. Hah!

Chairman. A bald bloke with big cigars that doesn't want to talk to you.

Disk Load & Save. Er, something to do with the cup draw?

Match of the Day. If you ever forget who programmed the sound, click here.

Fixture List. The fixture list.

League Tables. Erm...

Cash Flow. In the black? In the red? You get nothing for two in a bed. (Oh, sorry, the bed bit's covered in a different menu.)

AIR SUPPORT

Take a trip back in time, to a time when wireframes ruled the Earth.

Game: Air Support
Publisher: Psygnosis
Author: Alaric J Binnie
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

When you think about Psygnosis games, you think of the delectable beauty of *Agony* or the infuriating brilliance and originality of *Lemmings*. What you probably don't think about are pitiful wire frame 3D graphics and tedious strategy-cum-simulation games. And, sadly, *Air Support* falls solidly in to the latter category.

It puts you in control of various airborne and land-based military units, and a defence complex that enables you to build weapons and extra offensive units. The scenario is that real war has become too dangerous so all disputes are settled by simulated war. Oh come on, is that the best you can do? Or is it some sort of excuse so that the 'incredibly realistic virtual 3D' (virtually 3D – yes, virtual 3D – no way, not even wearing the 3D glasses which really do come with the game) is actually a simulation of a simulator?

"It's too much of a chore to play"

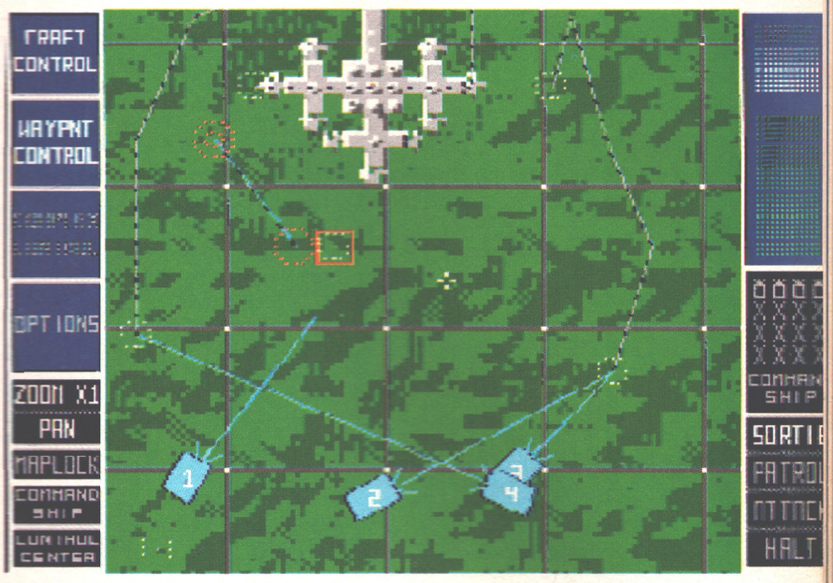
It's as though Psygnosis has had a sudden, and rather debilitating, corporate brain haemorrhage that has made it forget what games should look like. These are the heady days of the early 1990s, wire frames (not to be confused with zimmer frames, which are still jolly useful) went out with the New Romantics, Gyles Brandreth's jumpers, Triangle and 3D specs. So what are they doing in *Air Support*? Who can possibly say?

What you do need to know is the wire frames look terrible and the fact they move at a reasonably decent pace can't make up for the lack of detail. The net effect of the really rather sad graphics in the 3D section is that you spend most of the time playing at a strategic level on the overhead map view.

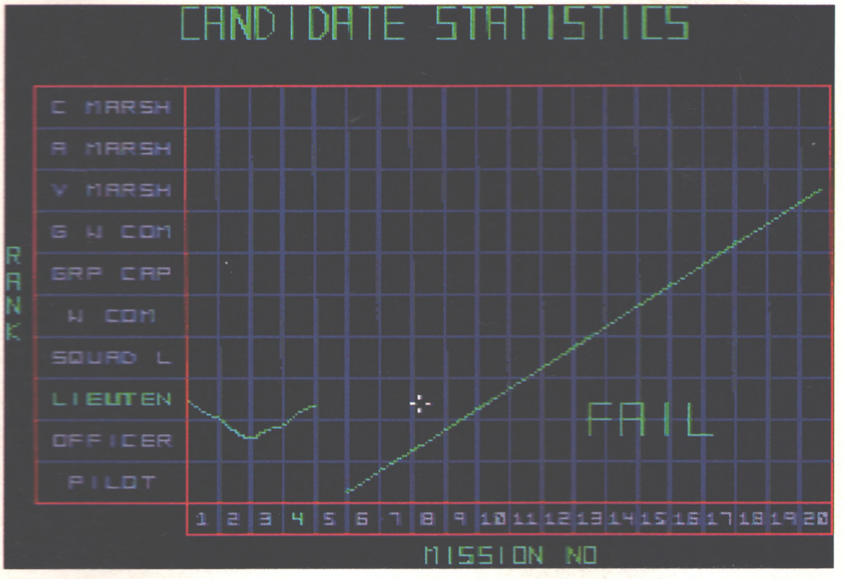
Occasionally you use the 3D to take manual control and achieve specific objectives, but the strategy side is much more entertaining and can become quite engrossing when you've soldiered through the twenty training missions. It's down to you to take out your enemy's defence complex. You could go down to the local night club or to a swanky restaurant, but the best strategy is to give detailed directions to your 16 units, keep your defence centre well defended, and make sure you produce enough units and weapons to replace those destroyed in the fog of war. You can switch to the 3D view to control your units individually, but there isn't much point – the controls are sluggish and the graphics are desperately unimpressive.

But, ultimately, the strategy side of the game doesn't give you enough reason to keep coming back for more. It's too much of a chore to play and it's just so uninspired and uninspiring. If you want to play a strategy war game, you should go for *Battle Isle* every time, but if you hanker for some 3D action as well, the aged classic *Carrier Command* still stands up remarkably well. And it only costs a tenner if you can find it.

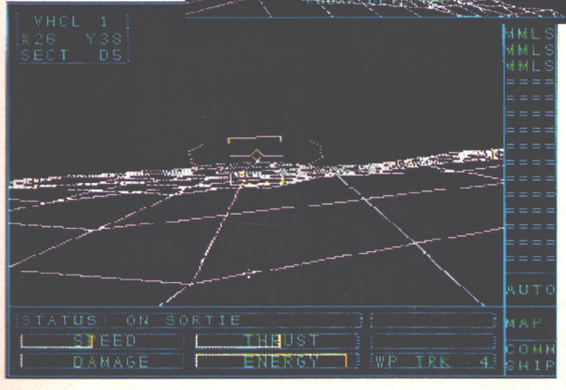
● *RICHARD LONGHURST*



The strategic map shows four units homing in on the enemy's defence complex. Set way points for the units to patrol, and then send them in to attack.



The graph plots your mission performance against that required and expected by The Academy. After a slow start, things are beginning to pick up. It's game over when you cross the fail line.



Above left: Blow away the enemy command ship with targeting missiles. Kaboom! Brilliant bit-mapped explosion. Or not as the case may be. Pathetic splinters of wire frame graphics are the order of the day here.

The basic 3D moves at a decent speed, but with the polygon shading it begins to grind – even when only every fourth polygon is shaded.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Air Support just doesn't hit the mark either as a serious strategy game or fun 3D blaster. Six of one game style and half a dozen of another come together in a molten mass, only the good bits dropped off along the way. Very much like negative synergy. *(What?! – Ed)* The sum of the whole is smaller than either of the two parts could have been. *(Oh, I see. – Ed)* And from Psygnosis too, what a shame.

55 PERCENT

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BUDGET

Budgets. They're those little tweeting bird things that maiden aunts keep in cages, aren't they? Or is that something else? Ah yes, we remember, inexpensive games. This month we've got some absolute classics for you.

BLADE WARRIOR

Publisher: GBH
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

Old Jonathan Davies, he's a laid back kind of guy. So when he described *Blade Warrior* as 'possibly the most atmospheric game ever' way back in issue 5 of AP, the rest of the AMIGA POWER team exchanged knowing glances, in no doubt that *Blade Warrior* must be really, really atmospheric. (Just as well really, because prior to its release *Blade Warrior* was mentioned in hushed conversation for months on end, occasionally popping up then dipping disappointingly back into 'development' once again.)

And by golly gosh, just over 12 months later what should I find, but –yes! – an incredibly atmospheric game. All of

The dark and moodily atmospheric world of *Blade Warrior*. Even JD liked it.

Jonathan's comments about *Blade Warrior* pretty much hold up for this budget re-release. The moody graphics with all foreground action in shadow still works a treat (in a bizarre kind of way), and the beat-'em-up elements still feel a little too artificial when placed in a fantasy-spellcasting kind of scenario. The other minor problemette, that of size (or lack of it) is still something of a bummer.

But then, the scrolling, hacking arcade adventure has rarely looked or felt so different. And, um (searches around for something new to say about the game) what about that atmosphere, eh? As atmospheric games go, this one's definitely one of them.

Oh, look it's no good. There's not really that much I can say about this game that hasn't been said before – it's just one of those games which is easier to play than to describe. So, why don't you just toddle along now, and do just that?

● *MARK RAMSHAW*

THE BOTTOM LINE
The Ridley Scott of computer games, *Blade Warrior* is all style and (thankfully) just enough substance. Ultimately slightly unsatisfying, and possibly more of a curiosity than a classic , but it's definitely the kind of quirky game which belongs in your budget collection.
70 PERCENT

DIZZY PRINCE OF THE YOLK FOLK

Publisher: Code Masters
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

Ah, Dizzy. Everyone's favourite talking, rolling, jumping and exploring egg. Don't you just love him?

If you answered 'no' to the above question, please skip the remainder of this review and go straight on to the next one. Thank you.....

Right, you're still reading, which means you have at least some affinity for the little oeuf and his identikit arcade adventures. You'll be further encouraged to buy this game (if you don't already have the *Excellent Adventures* compilation it first appeared on) by the knowledge that *Dizzy Prince of the Yolk Folk* is universally accepted as being the best of the many *Dizzy* adventures to date. And this despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that it's also the smallest, standing a mere 30 screens wide.

Why is it the best? Partly because it's of a more manageable size than most of the others: you actually stand a reasonable chance of eventually completing this one, which means you can launch into it with extra keenness. Then there's the fact that all the puzzles in *Yolk Folk* are reasonably logical: this means it's a proper test of skill and reasoning, rather than how lucky you are at combining the right two tenuously linked objects.

If any *Dizzy* game could convert the unbelievers, this would be the one. So if you've got a friend who really hates the blob in the boxing gloves, this is the game to lock them in a cupboard with for a few hours to try and cure their dislike. It's a *Dizzy* game like any other, it's just better than the rest.

● *ADAM PETERS*

Now it's available as a budget release, you can make use of those tips in AP16.

THE BOTTOM LINE
Dizzy's most excellent adventure yet – a 'must buy' for any Dizzyheads out there who don't already own it. But when is the *Dizzy Construction Kit* coming out?. You can't tell me it doesn't already exist...
85 PERCENT

GEM'X

Publisher: Global (DMI)
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

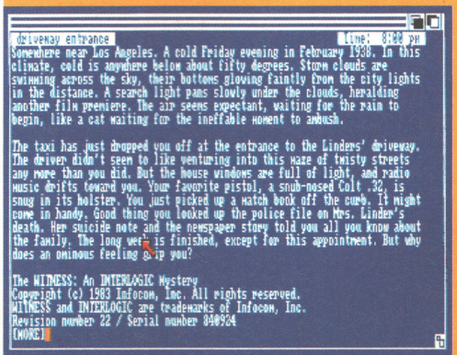
Things are a bit quiet on the software front at this time of year, which is always a bit of a bummer for the AP team when lunchtime comes around. I mean, *Sensible Soccer*, *Dyna Blaster*, *Crazy Cars III*, *Zool* and *Putty* are all brilliant games and all that, but you don't want to be playing all the same stuff all the time. How conveniently brilliant, then, that this month should see the budget re-release market throwing up some of the grooviest games of all time for us to get back to grips with after losing the original disks all those months ago.

Prising Les and Matt away from *SWIV* has been practically impossible all month, but when I've managed to beat them away and get to an Amiga, I've been playing *Gem'X*. Well, some of the time I play it. Lots of the time I just sit and listen to the amazingly beautiful intro music, and most of the rest of the time I just bang my

THE LOST TREASU

Publisher: Activision
Price: £39.99
Authors: Various
Release: Out now

Right. Let's get this straight from the start. None of the 20 games in this collection has any graphics or any sound. Yep, we're talking text adventures here. But put aside any preconceptions for a moment. If you take a gander at the bottom of this review you'll see I've actually given *The Lost Treasures* a pretty healthy score, and that isn't just because 20 games working out at £2 each is one hell of a bargain (although that has something to do with it). Basically this compilation collects together what are undoubtedly the best examples of the genre, and they all come from the vaults of a company whose name is whispered in reverential tones by adventure fans: Infocom.



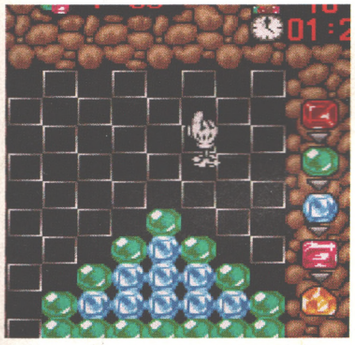
What?! No pretty pictures in *Witness*? Quick, call the repair man – there's something wrong with my Amiga.

Infocom pioneered the text adventure, and in the early '80s they were a force to be reckoned with in the games software market. And not without reason. While these days the text adventure has been hijacked by the PD fraternity, and has earned a reputation for being for committed anoraks who will brave even the most inscrutable of control systems, Infocom games were generally intelligent and, more importantly, fun to play. Infocom was bought by Activision in 1988, and

head on the desk and whimper as I desperately try to work out one of the torturously convoluted later levels in this brain-tinglingly tricky puzzle game. *Gem'X* features a near-perfect difficulty curve, which gently ramps up from embarrassingly easy to teeth-grindingly impossible. But the game's so gorgeously presented (lovely music, heartbreakingly sweet sampled speech, beautiful Japanese-style cartoon graphics, move retractions and adjustable control and everything else you could ask for) that you can never quite drag yourself away from it, however tough it gets.

Gem'X is currently sitting pretty (and we really do mean pretty, by the way) at Number 30 in the AMIGA POWER All-Time Top 100, but it's not making much of a showing so far in the readers' poll. The reason for that is almost certainly that it was pretty tricky to get a hold of when it first came out, so almost nobody's played it. Now, though, there's absolutely no excuse. Race out to your local software shop, handcuff yourself to the cash desk and refuse to leave until they sell you a copy of *Gem'X*. Then go home and handcuff yourself to your Amiga. Why? You might as well – you're not going to be going anywhere else in a hurry.

● *STUART CAMPBELL*



Let's get this straight. The one you click on changes one colour down... no, hang on...

THE BOTTOM LINE

As far as I'm concerned, this is the best puzzle game in the whole world, and it's also the best-looking and the best-sounding. The best budget bargain since *Rainbow Islands*. Do yourself a favour and buy it.

92 PERCENT

SEYMOUR GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

Publisher: Code Masters
Price: £7.99
Release: Out now

Whether you view Seymour as the greatest thing since, er, Dizzy or just another loathsome manifestation of the Codies' perpetual struggle to be 'loved', is, of course, a matter of opinion. But, as my The Last Resort postbag seems to reveal each month, he appears to be just as popular as his stablemates. Hmm.

Well, here he is in Hollywood, and as usual he can carry up to three objects and use them to solve puzzles. I didn't manage to crack too many of these, as before long I found myself lost in a maze. That shouldn't stop Seymour fans, though – in situations like this it's on with the light and out with the squared paper.

The graphics are as bright and (potentially) cheerful as ever, the puns as unfunny and the locations just as numerous. It's undeniably good value for money, especially for the 'younger player'.

I do think it's about time the Codies discovered the art of the directable jump, though. The ability to alter course in mid-air has become as much a part of platform games as the platforms themselves, and I feel lost without it. And another thing: if Seymour is to entrusted with the education of our youth he really ought to brush up on his grammar. It's dreadful, and even the instructions are full of clangers.

● *JONATHAN DAVIES*

What is it about receptionists? Even in jolly games like *Seymour* they always look totally fed up.

THE BOTTOM LINE

It seems you can't go wrong with Codies puzzley platform games, and here's another. Not as good as the best Dizzy games, though.

60 PERCENT

SWITCH BLADE 2

Publisher: GBH
Price: £9.99
Release: Out Now

Mark, I know I was complaining about always getting the crap games to review but I didn't mean for you to start giving me all the good stuff. What with this and *SWIV* in one issue I'm starting to believe that someone somewhere really cares for me. *(Don't you believe it. – Ed)* Originally released almost two years ago *Switchblade 2* caused quite a stir by recreating an arcade feel in a computer game. The action was so compelling that it caused a lot of sleepless nights, and I still have the bags under my eyes to prove it.

The idea is simple, you have to guide your man through a huge catacomb of rooms infested ➔

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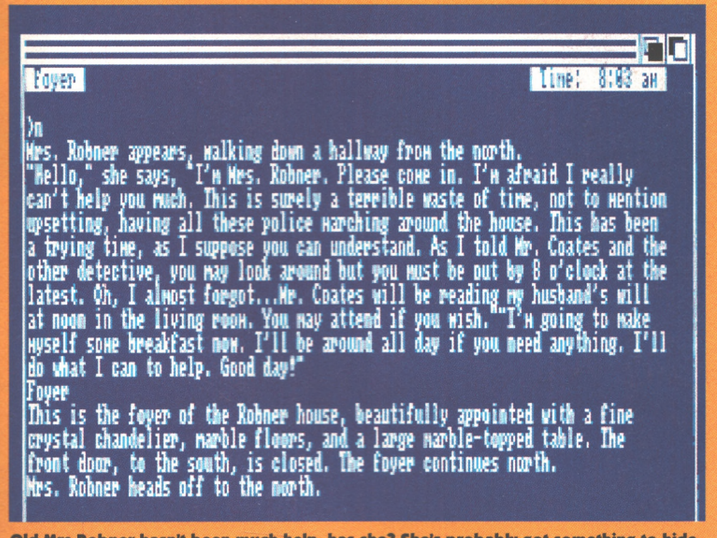


Old Mrs Robner hasn't been much help, has she? She's probably got something to hide.

vanished soon after, but Activision have plundered the vaults to bring us this wonderful compilation.

Highlights include all five volumes of the classic *Zork* adventures – which started in 1982 and concern a vast underground civilisation which has gone to ruin – plus the totally hoopy *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. This was actually written with Douglas Adams' help, and while the story soon departs from the the plot of the books, the humour is consistent. Your first task is to stop the room spinning when you wake up with an almighty hangover.

The range of subject matter is also refreshing wide – it's not all goblins with crystals balls. SF is featured in the Crystal Maze-like *Suspended*, *Starcross*, *Planet Fall* and *Stationfall* (which is dead difficult). *Moonmist* is a ghost story set in a Cornish castle, *Infidel* is set in ancient Egypt, while *Ballyhoo*, an absolute corker of a game, concerns a kidnapping at a circus. *Deadline* and *Witness* are both in a whodunnit? vein (and are two of the weakest games because they lack atmosphere) while in *Suspect* you are framed for a murder you didn't commit. *Lurking Horror* is a comic book-style affair with you snowbound in a school with... something else!

But never fear fantasy traditionalists, because to make up the numbers, you have *Enchanter* (which is a bit yawnsome and predictable), *Sorceror* (same again) and the really rather good *Spellbreaker*.

The packaging is stylish and doesn't reek of quick cash-in. All the relevant maps have been reprinted and the instructions and background info for each game have been collected together into one meaty but well-presented manual. There is also a book of hints that, besides being dead useful, also displays a great sense of humour sometimes missing from the games. Under the question 'How do I get off the roof?' for *Zork* the answer is, 'Write to Infocom and tell us how you got up there?' The lesson is, don't place too much importance on the questions to help you solve the games – a lot of them are red herrings.

And so what if there aren't any graphics? Use your imagination for a change, like you would with a good book. Besides, think of the advantages over graphic adventures (like the interminable *Space Quest* series) – you don't have to wait an eternity for pretty screens to load, and there's more room left on a disk to write a really good rattling yarn (not that the text is ever exactly up to Pullitzer prize winning standard – more your average Doctor Who novelisation).

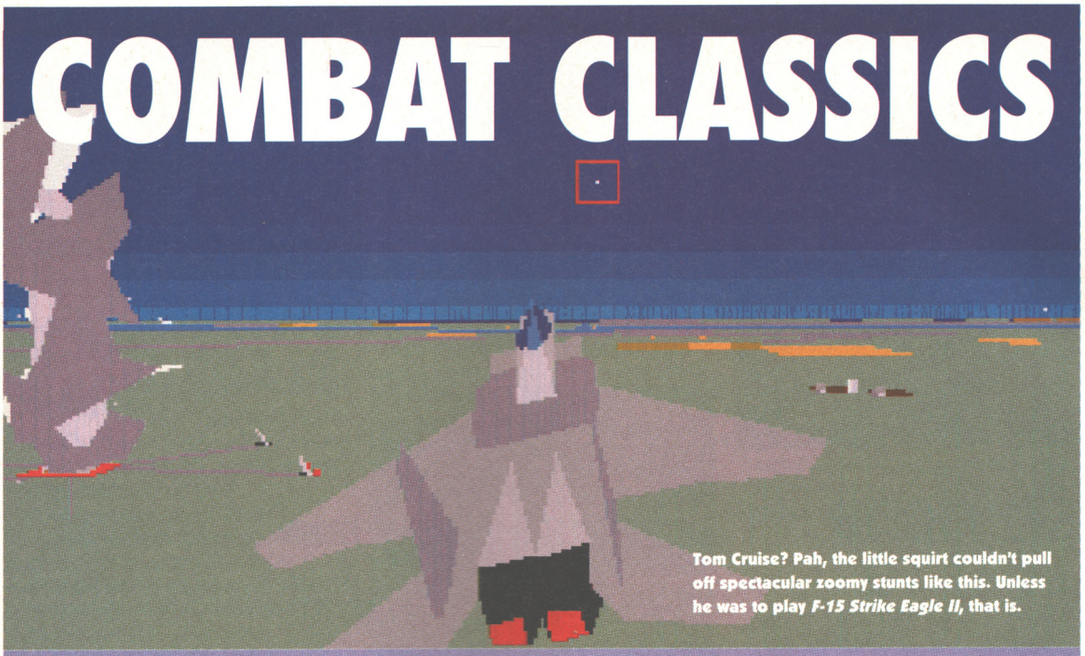
● *DAVE GOLDER*

THE BOTTOM LINE

This collection contains some slices of game playing history, but it is more than just a curio. Many of the games are still very engrossing after all these years, and prove that good gameplay still wins over flashy effects. If you have any tolerance for text adventures at all, then these are the best you'll find anywhere.

80 PERCENT

COMBAT CLASSICS



Tom Cruise? Pah, the little squirt couldn't pull off spectacular zoomy stunts like this. Unless he was to play *F-15 Strike Eagle II*, that is.

Publisher: Empire
Price:£29.99
Authors: Various
Release: Out now

Compilations are a bit of a hit and miss affair. Only a handful manage to avoid the inclusion of a duffer, the rest always blowing it with that atrocity from the fog of 1986. Empire's last stab at compilations proved something of a motley collection, but they seem to have got the mix pretty much right with this one.

At first glance the minimal line-up might seem like a tech-head's dream – *688 Attack Sub, F-15 Strike Eagle II* and *Team Yankee* – but looks can be deceptive, so just you take a bite.

Let's wade through *688 Attack Sub* first, shall we? There's really no getting round it. If there are any weak links in the chain then this is it. Let's be honest, as well designed and programmed as *688 Attack Sub* is, it's something of an eclectic choice for a compilation. I really can't see too many people getting worked up over this one. Delve (ahem) deeper though and there's actually some good fun to be had. And for once, neat graphics are on offer, with some good 3D routines and stuff. Gosh.

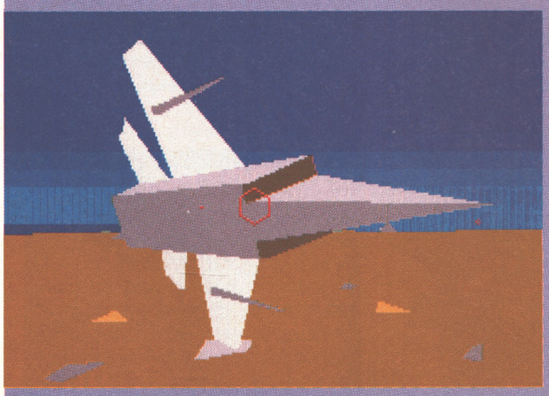
Not as complex as *Pacific Islands*, but *Team Yankee* is damn fine anyway.

Moving swiftly on, we come to the much more accessible *Team Yankee*. Essentially a less ambitious version of *Pacific Islands*, the only real downside to this game is that it's uncomfortably similar to its successor. Limited game structure aside, *Team Yankee* is really rather special. The graphics will deter some, but beneath that dodgy 3D exterior beat the heart of a brilliant tank-based strategy/arcade crossover. A real gem, *Team Yankee* was never really accepted by the the action orientated public. Maybe its inclusion will sort that out.

But wait.. the REAL reason for the golly-gosh mark at the end of this review is this. This is the big one. This is *F-15 Strike Eagle II*. Spectacular in every way, this represents the cream of '91. Originally released by MicroProse, this one still soars up there with the classic *F/A-18 Interceptor* and *Knights Of The Sky*. There's Top Gun action aplenty waiting in this hot little number, and it's still just about worth pulling out 30 quid for this one alone.

But – hey! – when you get the totally tank-tastic *Team Yankee* action sim thing and a well done (if slightly minority interest) *688 Attack Sub* as well, then there shouldn't be any question about a speedy purchase.

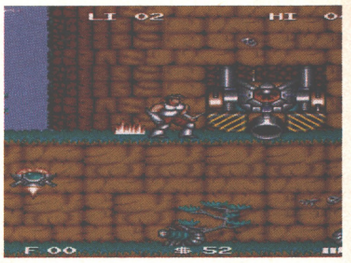
● *MARK RAMSHAW*



Oh, that *F-15 Strike Eagle II* is just so spectacular. And now thanks to Empire, it comes with two other groovy titles.

THE BOTTOM LINE
What *Combat Classics* lacks in numbers it sure makes up for in quality. Go on, off to your friendly computer game retailer with you.

82 PERCENT



What's happening? Classic games on budget labels. That can't be right.

with strange creatures, robot sentries and other security measures out to stop you. It's the normal "Stopthemadmanfrom takingovertheworldandgettheswitchblade back" syndrome that we've seen a million times before *(I've told you a million times to stop exaggerating. – Ed)* but with the great cybergraphics and sheer addictive action it is one of the best.

After asking round the office it seems that *Switchblade 2* wasn't everybody's cup of tea (two of us liked it) but if you like platform/slash-'em-up games then you can't go wrong with this. Besides, what do they know? *(You're fired. – Ed)*. Take it from me, you'll play this to death trying to see what is hidden in that next section. Many's the time that I've played this to pass a few minutes and found myself still playing it hours later. If a game does that to me, then it has to be good. Even when you complete it there is still the urge to go back and see if you missed anything which is unusual for games of this genre.

It is safe to say that if GBH (Gremlin) keep coming out with releases like this then by Christmas they're going to have to budget market sewn up for themselves. Top quality releases will ensure that the Amiga budget market stays buoyant and this goes to show that top quality games do work on budget labels. If you haven't already got this then you should be ashamed of yourself, but make up for it by saying 200 hail Marys and then going and buying this straight away.

● *LES ELLIS*

THE BOTTOM LINE
Switchblade 2 on budget? You bet. Another game destined to once again become a smash hit on its comeback. It's very addictive, very slick, and very, very big. It's as close as you're going to get to sheer entertainment.

90 PERCENT

SWIV

Publisher: Kixx
Price: £9.99
Release: Out Now

It's happened! The best shoot-'em-up to appear on the Amiga has finally made it onto the budget scene! *(Les, calm down. – Ed)* What more could you want? Frantic arcade action, stunning graphics, amazing sound – an awesome game. In case you hadn't realised, you are looking at THE

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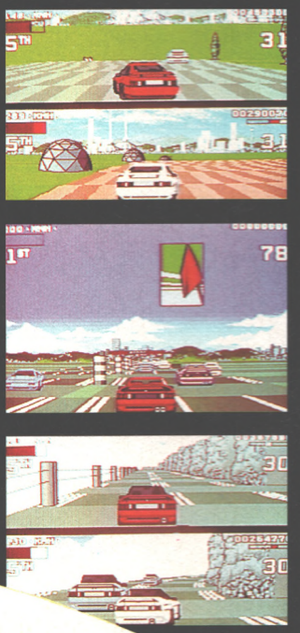

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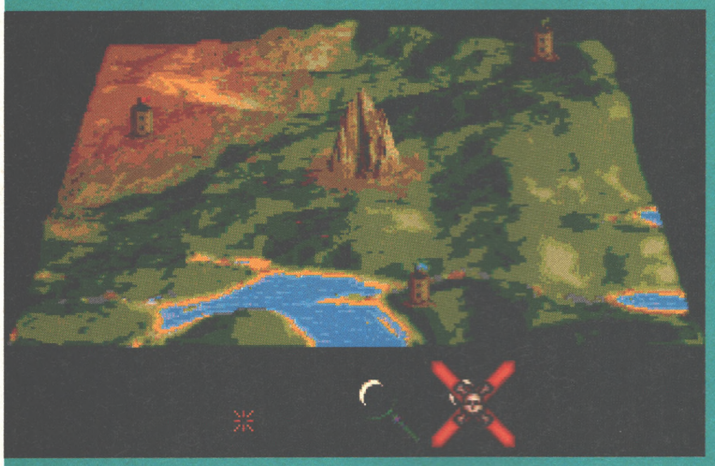
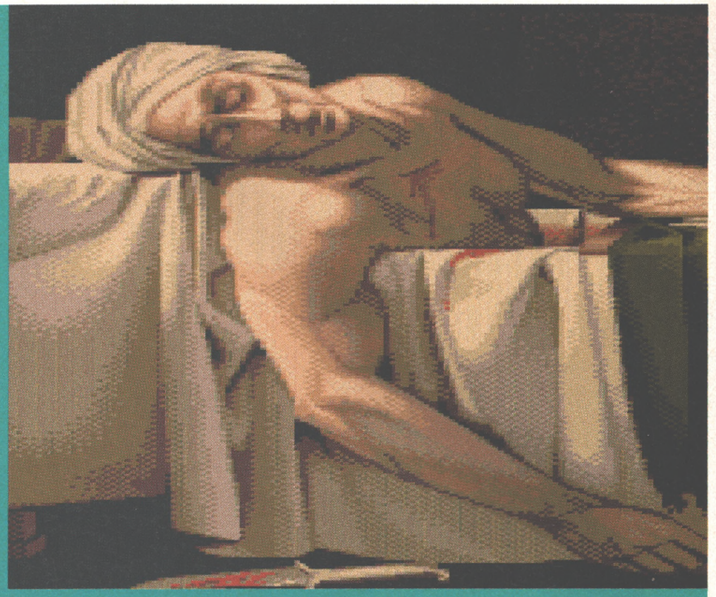


It might not be the most entertaining game in the compilation, but it's worth a go.



Stormmaster – we loved it at full price. Now in a compilation, everyone's a winner.

Publisher: Daze Marketing
Price: £25.99
Release: Out now

A compilation of three, largely French, strategy games sounds like... well, the sort of thing I generally end up reviewing. I hadn't been having a particularly rewarding day, and the prospect of three ludicrously complicated, weird, scruffily presented, old and – above all – dull games with dragons and things in wasn't an appealing one.

What joy, therefore, when all three games turned out to be gorgeous-looking, full of things to do, as fresh as the day they they were picked and – to varying extents – actually quite enjoyable.

Dragon's Breath is the most aged of the three games, and also the least rewarding. That's not to say it's bad. It's just a bit more complicated and slow-moving than I think most people will be prepared to put up with. What you've got to do, you see, is breed dragons. These are used to do battle with your two opponents (who can be human or computer-controlled). Actually doing this involves endless playing around with icons and things, and one of the most formidable spell systems I've ever encountered. (If you're into spells, this is the game for you.) The graphics are really very attractive, and everything works just like it says in the manual, but it just didn't inspire me enough to keep playing. Under different circumstances I may well have been swayed.

Crystals of Arborea is next on my mental heap, and – oops – it received quite a pounding in the very first issue of AMIGA POWER (48 percent's worth, in fact). It's one of those 3D *Dungeon Master*-type things, only in an outdoor environment, and it really does look exceptionally pretty. The problem is that nothing much ever really happens, and even then there tend to be long disk-accessing delays between things not happening (if you see what I mean). It's okay, just a bit dull and repetitive.

Finally there's *Storm Master.* Matt Squires worked himself up into quite a sweat over this one in AP11, awarding it 86%. I'm not about to argue. It's splendidly original and beautifully executed. As with most of these strategy games, the object is to build up an empire by clobbering your opponents, but here the clobbering is done with bizarre Jules Verne-style flying chariots which are built and manned, and then flown in a fabulous 3D combat sequence. The graphics are absolutely superb, and, while the game takes a while to get to grips with, it's worth every second of it.

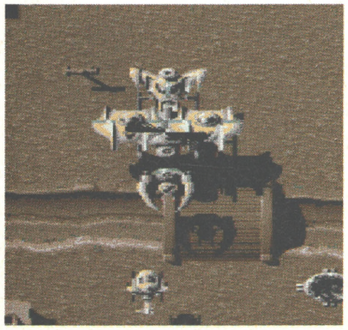
So, that's two slightly iffy (though by no means worthless) games and one completely fantastic game, all for the price of, er, one completely fantastic game. Quite what that means I'm not sure, but I don't think I'd feel too hard done by after handing over 26 quid for this lot.

● *JONATHON DAVIES*

THE BOTTOM LINE

All very strategy-based, but excellent value for money. *Storm Master* is worth the asking price by itself, while the other two could provide weeks of fun if you're prepared to stick with them.

89 PERCENT



A great game for one, but get a mate to take the jeep and it's even better.

game you have to add to your collection this month. If you get nothing else in the next four weeks, make sure you get this.

When it first appeared this just about blew everybody away (literally). The follow up to *Silkworm* (which is still a cracking blast, incidentally) pits you and a friend against a massive array of enemy craft in the helicopter/jeep combination that proved more than a match for the bad guys in the original game.

If ever a game proved that the Amiga could match any console and even make some arcade machines gulp, this was it. Believe me, you'll be hooked from start to finish. If you ever get to the finish, of course... It's tough, but – hey – no one said saving the world was easy. Mind you, everything about this game still smacks of player-friendliness. No delays for disk accessing, the level (there is only one, but it's huge) loads while you're playing. Whatever happened to Dynamic Loading? We loved it. And there's none of that 'losing all your power-ups when you die' stuff, you just lose one level of firepower. Why can't all games be like this?

If you want a game that will keep you relentlessly hammering away at your joystick for hours on end then this is the one to go for. At full price it was a bargain, now you can pick it up for a tenner it easily becomes the best value for money shoot-'em-up on the market. *SWIV* is like a good wine, it matures with age. A dead cert to become a best seller once again.

● *LES ELLIS*

THE BOTTOM LINE

I'm running out of things to say, so I'll round off by saying *SWIV* is one of the top two shoot-'em-ups of all time (*Apidya* is the other) and shouldn't be beaten for quite a while. You can't afford to miss it.

92 PERCENT

Coming soon...

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...The Video

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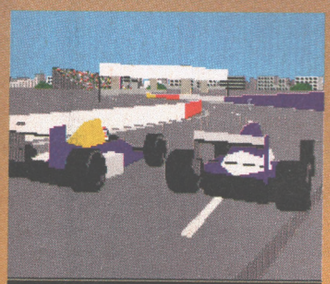

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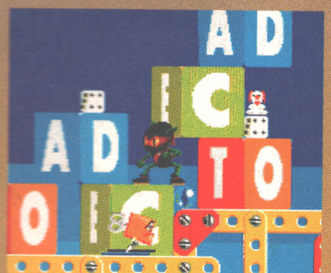

ZOOL

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READ IT

THURSDAY 15 OCTOBER '92

Ever heard of *Sonic The Hedgehog*? Of course you have. Well one year after taking the videogaming world by storm, he's back on the Mega Drive in his second adventure. Question is, of course – is it any good? For the UK's first review and 108 pages crammed with Mega Drive features, news and reviews, just do as the page says: read it.

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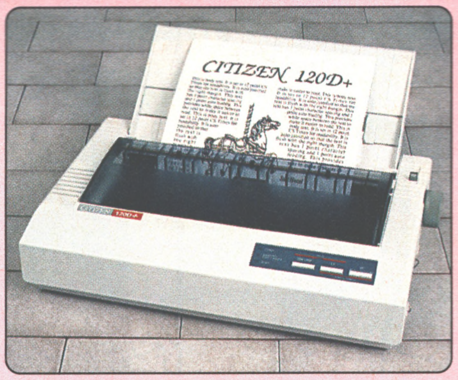

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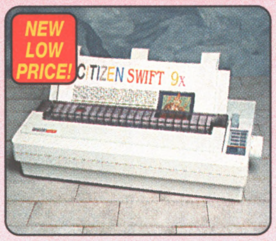

192 CPS 136 COLUMN

- Citizen Swift 9x - 9 pin - 136 column
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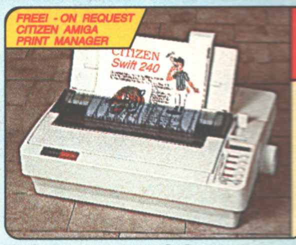

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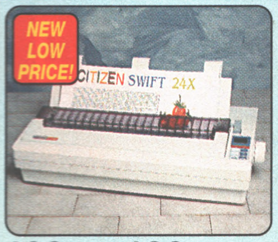

192 CPS 136 COLUMN

- Citizen Swift 24x - 24 pin - 136 column
- 192cps Draft, 64cps NLQ
- 8K Printer Buffer + 4 Fonts
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PD

And it's not over yet. There's still a few more reviews to come as Dave Golder checks out the world of the free and the nearly free in that mysterious Public Domain. This month, our Dave has been looking at some shareware as well as the usual freebies.

HELLZONE

NBS
Shareware AUS$12

Despite the name, this is not a 'driving-in-the-London-rush-hour traffic' sim. It's one of those 'flying-left-to-right-through-a-nasties-infested-tunnel-blasting-everything-that moves'-type affairs.

Hellzone is pretty impressive, despite a couple of oddities. One is that it has only two-levels and they have to be booted separately. The other is the scoring. You don't score points for blasting, you just get more points the longer you stay alive. You start off with full energy, and hits from the enemy drain it. Some hits drain more than others. A variety of power-ups improve your weapons or replenish your energy.

The graphics are very atmospheric and the sound is awesome – it really feels like you're in a huge tunnel. There's a vast range of nasties, and just as everything seems to be settling into a pattern along comes another horrible surprise to stop you getting complacent. Some of the collision detection is a bit off, but, as it usually works in your favour, who cares?

No points for killing, just for staying alive. But don't stop shooting or you're bound to die.

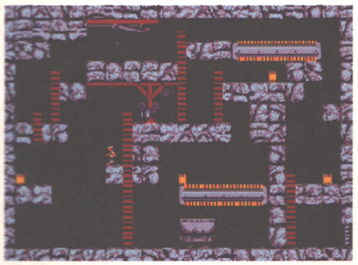
VERDICT: Why take one good-looking blast-'em-up into the shower when you can take two? When you order *Cybernetix* from NBS ask 'em for this one as well. It's fab.
★★★★

GLASSBACK

NBS
Shareware £3

A platform game! Great, I thought, I'll be able to get in that joke about more platforms than a Bay City Roller concert that I nicked... well, I would, but I never got much further than a couple of levels. This game is unnecessarily difficult, which is a shame as it shows some promise.

You play a miner, Glassback, who has been trapped by his fellow miners in a mine and wants to get out. To get out of each screen you have to collect some things that look like radiators and avoid the traps. Simple? Don't you believe it.



Please mister, can we have our *Glassback*? *(You really are pushing your luck – Ed.)*

It's all a matter of timing. You have to make your move at just the right moment. There's no room for error, at all, even on the first screen. Okay, so things shouldn't be easy, but really! The reward for getting through one level is to get to another that's just about as difficult. There's no sense of progression. It starts hard and stays that way. Simplistic graphics and irritating sound don't help much either.

VERDICT: Far too difficult, and not interesting enough to make it worth persevering with.
★★

DOCTOR MARIO

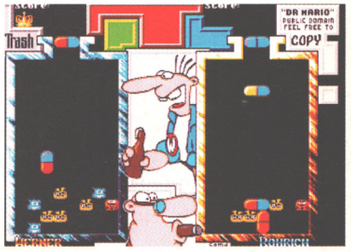
Riverdene

"Concept and name shamelessly ripped off from Nintendo," says the intro. And they are. But *Doctor Mario* still makes a damned good game.

A *Columns*-like puzzle it involves arranging falling blocks into rows of four at which point they vanish from play. Some coloured bugs are already on screen at the beginning of each game and the aim is to get rid of all the bugs. There are more bugs on later levels, and, er, that's it.

It's simple but fun, and even better in two-player mode where you battle it out to see who can clear their side of the screen first. If you make large numbers of blocks vanish at once, extra blocks will fall randomly on your opponent's screen.

VERDICT: Very similar to *Interferon* (reviewed in AP17) but its presentation is so much better – there's a lot of demo-style pizzazz and music – and it has two-player mode.
★★★★



Falling blocks and geezers with big noses.

CYBERNETIX

NBS, Shareware: £5

It can happen! And it has! Finally, a PD game – all right, shareware, but still darned cheap – that I can whole-heartedly say is better than a lot of the commercial stuff that's available. In fact, it's so good it had me on the phone ringing around all the (other) Amiga experts I know to check that it wasn't pirated from Germany or somewhere, but no, joy of joys, it was a kosher, New Zealand-written slice of freely distributable software. My life has meaning once more! *(That's enough of the Oscar-winning acceptance speech type sincerity – Ed.)*

So, why is *Cybernetix* so good? Well, it certainly isn't originality. It's basically *Defender* meets *Asteroids* on steroids. A sideways-scrolling blast-'em-up where you have to obliterate everything in each section which comes complete with a variety of power-ups, bonus lives every 10,000 points and a smart bomb. But there are three main reasons why it shines. It looks stunning, it plays like a dream and it's fast. Faster, in fact, than a very fast thing.

You start off with a screen full of asteroids which you blast into smaller pieces which can then be destroyed These release little blue crystals which you have to collect. But there are also enemy ships collecting them too, and if you don't pick the crystals up quickly enough, an assassin ship appears, and he's real tough to get rid of – not only does he dart around like a wasp caught inside a glass, he also takes a few shots to destroy.

At last, a really high quality space blaster for (nearly) nothing.

The variety and volume of enemy ships is mind-boggling. Not only do they look different they also attack in different formations. Some even leave mines behind. The different power-ups are also impressive. The arc shield is a little ball which whizzes around you offering some protection, but still allowing some bullets to get through.

The graphics are pure quality. The asteroids really look 3D while the substantial-looking ships explode into shrapnel, and some even start spouting smoke and spiralling out of control when they are first hit and need to be hit again. The controls are very responsive, which they need to be at the speeds this game reaches. The radar is also very clear and you need to keep one eye on it to see where the alien ships are when they're off the main screen.

There are tons of sectors to clear, some with special missions, and a two-player option. Oh yes, and the sound is also superb.

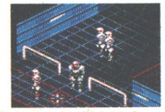
VERDICT: The concept might not be all that original, but the game has so much style, action and playability, who cares? Do yourself a favour, and get it now and remind yourself what good old blasting is all about.
★★★★★

And when you've shot the baddies, you get loads of points.

Addresses: NBS Public Domain Library, 1 Chain Lane, Newport, Isle of Wight. ● RIVERDENE, 30a School Road, Tylehurst, Redding, Berks. RG3 5AN. ☎ 0734 452 416

POINTS OF VIEW

Of course, we don't always have the same views about the same games. Here's this month's big picture...

	POOL	DOODLEBUG	BAT 2	ASSASSIN	ROME AD92	SHUTTLE	 SHADOWORLDS	AQUATIC GAMES	SABRE TEAM	ENCHANTIA
MARK RAMSHAW	Better than the last one (ish). ★★★★	Totally platform–tastic! ★★★★	Ambitious and really jolly good. ★★★★	Great. Ish. ★★★★	Not as good as the B52s' version. ★★★	Haven't played it.	A bit slow but groovy. ★★★★	Mutton dressed up as fish. ★★★	Neat in a *Laser Squad* way. ★★★★	Not bad at all. Nice one. ★★★★
STUART CAMPBELL	Good, but seen it before. ★★★★	Not much to it, but nice enough ★★★★	Haven't played it.	A bit too empty for my liking ★★★★	Haven't played it.	Not my kind of thing at all ★★	Haven't played it.	Too simplistic for the money ★★★	Too slow, but still great fun. ★★★★	Lovely, but duff control system. ★★★★
GARY PENN	Alright, if you like pool. ★★★	Alright, if you like platforms. ★★★	Alright, if you like *BAT*. ★★★	Alright, if you like *Strider*. ★★★	Alright, if you like *Robin Hood*. ★★★	Alright, if you like knobs. ★	Alright, if you like *Simulcra*. ★★★	Alright, if you like fish. ★★★	Alright, if you hate terrorists. ★★★	Alright, if you... *(like getting fired. – Ed)*
MATTHEW SQUIRES	Slick and very terrific. ★★★★★	Fun, amusing and very terrific. ★★★★	Interesting, but not quite there. ★★★	Awesome (and terrific). ★★★★★	Haven't played it.	Haven't played it.	Haven't played it.	Good, clean fishy fun. ★★★★	Haven't played it.	Wickedly interesting. ★★★★
LES ELLIS	Haven't played it.	It's really sweet. ★★★★	Haven't played it.	Not as good as Matt sez. ★★★	ZSlow and boRing. ★★	Well worth the wait ★★★★	Slower and more boring. ★★	Sad excuse for a computer game ★	Had potential, but didn't work. ★★★	Piggin' awesome! ★★★★★

ON SALE 19TH NOV

NEXT MONTH

1992, 1993 AND ALL THAT

In the unfeasibly spectacular December issue of AMIGA POWER we take a look over the past year, take a peek into '93, and of course review such long awaited games as *Road Rash*, *Humans* and *Pinball Fantasies*. AMIGA POWER – file under attitude.

AMIGA POWER AND GREMLIN PRESENT A *LOTUS III* COMPETITION

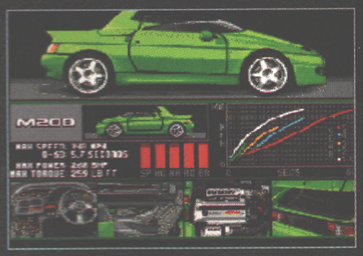
WIN!

A DAY IN A LOTUS!

THE ULTIMATE DRIVE!

We're offering two lucky winners and their pals, a chance to visit the Lotus factory and go on the test track in either an Elan or an Esprit. This time it's not on your Amiga – it's the real thing. So you're not only going to see how the Lotus is put together from start to finish, but you'll be in the cockpit for the 'track' test too. It's here that the Lotus cars are pushed to the limit in speed, handling and control. Very few people get into a Lotus for 'real', let alone get onto the Lotus test track. Here's your chance to do all of this and more ...you'll be presented with a bag of Lotus goodies at the end of a very 'fast' and special day. Eight runners up will each receive a copy of *Lotus III*, so there's every reason to enter this fab compo.

SO WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO DO?



Simply answer the following three questions.

1. Name four sports models produced by Lotus, other than the Elan.

2. Lotus are famous for their victories in Formula One racing. In 1972 they achieved the World Championship double. Who was the driver?

3. The first Lotus was built in 1947, based on which British car?

There, simple wasn't it?

Now write your answers down on a postcard – or the back of a cereal packet, just for a change – and send your entries to: 'I'd Prefer A Skoda Competition', AMIGA POWER, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW.

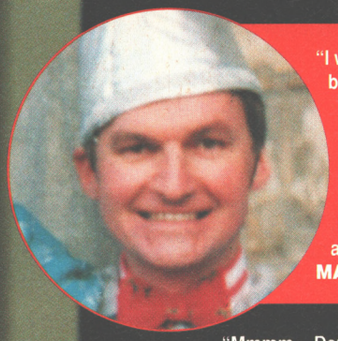
COMPETITION

RULES AND REGULATIONS

Employees of Future, Gremlin, Lotus and anyone who's raced for Lotus are not eligible to enter (particularly if they've got a moustache).

The Editor (who isn't fat, honestly) has the right to be a miserable old goat if he wants and his decision is final.

The closing date for entries is 31st November 1992.



"I would think not. It was built by Commodore and partners to become a very powerful brand name in the home computer field. You cannot dispute that the Amiga is a strong and successful brand name. Commodore have to capitalise on that by doing what they are doing and that's making a range of Amiga machines to suit as many pockets as they feel fit. If it had been left as just the Amiga 500 then its legs would be a bit creaky but because Commodore have expanded out, quite rightly, its legs are well oiled and fighting fit."
MARK STRACHAN, Joint Managing Director of Domark

"No. I don't push it to its limits, I have to write code that runs on all machines. *Snooker* doesn't use any fancy features at all. People asked the same question of the 64 but every year something more amazing would come out. I saw a demo of Stavros' new game *(He means Galactic. – Ed)*... the amount of things he had moving around was amazing, there was a fantastic amount of stuff, but I can't say much for the game. I didn't play it."
ARCHER MACLEAN, author of *IK+*, *Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker* and *Pool*

"Mmmm... Developers can go a bit further with it. In terms of creating a game that would run on an Amiga, all the elements such as graphics and sound and so on, I would say no. You still see some good stuff on the Spectrum eight years later. There's still some stuff you could do with the Amiga that's pretty cool. Unless you have a hard drive for some things it's going to start proving difficult. Killing the flow of a game makes it very different, especially with bringing big PC titles across."
ERIC MATTHEWS, Designer for The Bitmap Brothers

"When the best programmers were working on the Commodore 64 they nearly pushed it to its limits, but then they all upgraded to the Amiga, and now they're moving on to the PC or consoles, so I don't think the Amiga'll get pushed any more. I've been very impressed with some technically very adept stuff lately, such as *Project X*. *Wing Commander* on the Amiga is going to be pushing it as much as anyone else have ever done."
PHIL HARRISON, International Development Manager for Mindscape

"No, not at all. If the Amiga were sustained with continual support then people will be doing stuff in a few years time that we thought impossible, but that's a big 'if'. When the Amiga first arrived it knocked spots off the PC, but with PC power expanding it's leaving the Amiga behind. We're using light-source shaded texture-mapped 3D now and we're breaking our backs to get the Amiga working at anything like a playable speed."
KEVIN BULMER, Dimension Creative Designs (Dementia)

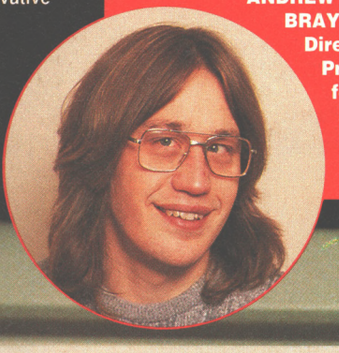
"The Amiga is starting to stagnate but it's certainly not been pushed to its limits. The trouble is it's starting to restrict what you can do. I think the problem is that, as far as 3D goes, developers see the PC as being very much more capable. With the Amiga you have to work very hard to squeeze more out of it."
DAVID BRABEN, author of *Virus* and *Elite II*, and co-author of the original *Elite*

"I would probably say yes, now. We're having problems writing stuff we'd like to write. Technically, there's not a lot more you can do with it. A lot of people fail to do it though."
MARTYN BROWN, Product Manager for Team 17

"I don't think so. I think the problem is, as new and more technically advanced hardware comes out there's no need to push it. The Spectrum was pushed because there was very little competition. Now you just swap over to another machine, so maybe the challenge isn't there any more to do that."
GARY BRACEY, Software Manager for Ocean

"You don't necessarily need to push hardware to the limit for good games but you always need to innovate to keep the public interested in the product. Anyway, you can't ever push a machine to its limits. They're just tools and you can always find new, more innovative ways of doing things. How technically clever a game is doesn't really determine how playable it will be. The Commodore 64 proved that."
GARY SHEINWALD, Development Manager for Audiogenic

"In certain directions, certainly. The amount of stuff you can throw around on the screen, as far as arcade games are concerned, *Turrican II* and *Project X* are throwing around about as much as you can. On the creative side there's plenty of scope, and sonically, the sound tends to get squeezed by things people want to see on screen. You can push in different directions."
ANDREW BRAYBROOK, Director and Project Leader for Graftgold, and author of *Fire And Ice*



HAS THE A
PUSHED TO I

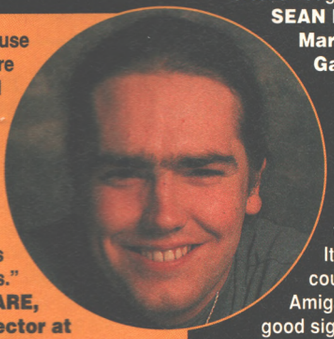
But then, do you need to push the pliable hard

"Nearly. There might be still one or two areas left. Particularly the disk accessing – some games are affected very badly by it. We've tried to do something about it by making it transparent to the player. Some people are utilising what the Amiga can do – sound-wise they're doing what they can do, and the same graphically – but it's the development of the techniques that's important now."
MEV DINC, Project Manager and 'Main Man' at Vivid Image

"I think technically, yes. Its future is as a medium range games machine. I think all the popular games will go onto the console formats instead of the Amiga."
RICH UNDERHILL, Joint Director of Arc Developments

"This year, no. But in the next it possibly will cater for a more specialist niche. I think possibly there will be products coming out for the one meg Amiga which are impressive but I don't see any major breakthroughs happening."
SEAN BRENNAN, Sales and Marketing Director for Virgin Games Software

"No. I think all you need to do is look the Spectrum market to see that. There aren't many people doing stuff for the Spectrum these days, but you still see things that make you go 'Blimey, I didn't know you could do that'. The Amiga will be pushed further as long as the good programmers are not drawn off by the console side."
SIMON JEFFERY, Marketing Communications Manager for Electronic Arts



"No. Because programmers are breaking new ground all the time. They always think they have reached the limits but they can't see beyond their latest project. Someone's always moving the goalposts."
JON HARE, Orchestrating Director at Sensible Software

"No. Mainly because they've bought out a bigger Amiga anyway. The Amiga 500 can do a lot more but it takes time to develop the projects. It has been pushed but it could go a lot further. The Amiga's still selling so that's a good sign – it'll be around for a another few years, that's for sure. Hopefully Commodore will stick some more chips in there some day."
TONY CROWTHER, author of *Captive* and *Knightmare*

"In its present form I think it has. An awful lot of games are one meg only, and that's pushed things a bit further. There are a lot of people starting to look at other machines and saying 'Why should we push Amiga to its limits when we can do all these things so much easier on other machines?'. Maybe in design terms it has, and the Amiga is still the easiest machine to design for because it has so much as standard, whereas, say, with the PC, nothing seems standard."
PETER MOLYNEUX, Managing Technical Director for Bullfrog and author of *Populous* & *Populous II*

"You must be joking. Not even slightly. There are a few technos – is that the equivalent of musos? – around who've done a few good things. I've done this high density disk thing which gets one and half meg on a normal disk. The Amiga's a little bit light for what it'd like to do so you need superhuman efforts to get there. I like some of the demos. Some of the Tobias Richter ones... not quite 'Ooh, that's nice' but sort of 'Well, thank you.'"
NICK PELLING, the man bringing *Wing Commander* to the Amiga

"Yes, I think it has. I think it has been at its limits for quite a number of years now. Really the only thing you can do are different things not new things. An awful lot of code has been rewritten."
RICHARD LUCAS, General Manager for the Hardware Division of Argonaut Software

"It's getting very close. The hardware features don't necessarily interest us when we start developing a game. I don't think we could get more out of the Amiga than we're currently getting. Take *Jaguar* – and Gremlin's *Lotus III* and *Nigel Mansell* for that matter – I don't believe you will get a game with as many sprites or bigger sprites running any faster on the Amiga. We didn't get it much quicker than *Lotus II* but there were more things on the road and it ran a bit faster. It's a case of going back to the basics of game design now. But there's still an awful lot of crud software not using anything of the Amiga."
JEREMY SMITH, 'The Man' at Core Design

"In different ways it has. *Rainbow Islands* seems to push it to its limits, although not in a huge 3D maths type of thing. What more do you want from a machine? You don't have to push it to produce a good game. I really don't think that pushing it is necessary."
COLIN FUIDGE, R&D Director for Konami UK

AMIGA BEEN ITS LIMITS?

le hardware to pull out playable software?

85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92

FROM THE MAKERS OF THE WORLD'S BEST SELLING AMIGA MAGAZINE

The Amiga Format Annual 1993

Past
We look back at all the big Amiga news of 1992

Present
We look back at all the big Amiga news of 1992

Future
We look back at all the big Amiga news of 1992

What a year it's been! We've seen an Amiga revolution, with new models out, the A570 CDTV drive shipping and the promise of even better Amigas to come. And it's not just Commodore that's been busy – news of amazing new hardware and software developments has come thick and fast.

To put the year in perspective and to find out what's on the cards, we're grilling all the experts, hardware and software manufacturers to find their veiws on where the Amiga is headed. For a year in view, plus exciting news of what's coming up, make sure you get the Amiga Format Annual.

On sale October 22 Only £3.95 Don't miss it!

DO THE write THING

And the letters just keep on coming. This month we've got a special message for John Walker. Your mum wants a word with you, John. It seems you're not the loving son you once were, John, and to be honest we're appalled. Deeply appalled.

● Address your letters to: AMIGA POWER, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, Avon, BA1 2BW.

'GRIN/SMIRK/CRINGE/GLOAT'

Dear AP

You're big, you're brazen, you're blonde and by golly you're busty, you're the Bet Lynch of Amiga games magazines and you can pull me a pint anytime.

But, and like Bet's behind, it's a big but, your review of *Sensible Soccer* and your subsequent double-glazing-salesman-type hard sell of the game are crazier than a mad March hare in August. So get off my doorstep before I set the pit bulls on you, you scamps. It's rubbish.

Also, since your survey has just revealed that over three quarters of your readership is over 15, could you cut the new kiddie-friendly covers? As if last month's musclebound refugee from Saturday morning cartoons wasn't bad enough, September's edition gives us a one-eyed Chris Tarrant fighting his way through a bag of KP Outer Spacers. I'm an adult *(So why do you watch Saturday morning cartoons? – Ed)* and I don't want to feel embarrassed buying your mag, which despite these minor moans, I don't plan to give up. Oh no.

Yours sincerely, Steve James, Watford, Herts

PS I've just looked through my Readers Digest Dictionary of Bizarre Facial Expressions and I still can't identify the grin/smirk/cringe/gloat concoction that Jon Hare of Sensible Software sports with such abandon in your pages every month. If you're going to have gratuitous mugshots, how about one of that nice Frank Bough?

'HIP HOP GUYS AND DOLLS'

Hi there AP

I just thought that I'd take a break from leisure-suiting to drop you a line. Geez, you don't know how lonely it can get, looking for love almost every day of the year. You know, one of these days I might even hang up my leisure suit for good. It is a tough and rocky track that leads to the girl of my dreams and I keep on falling over the rocks. Well that's just life isn't it? It's almost as if no one in the world loves me (sob). I could walk to the moon and no one would notice that I'd gone. I read your 50percent review of my latest adventure. 50 whole percent. Geez, thanks. I still can't get over it. If I'd known I wouldn't have bothered. To think that you folks used to be light hearted, fun loving, leisure suit , hip hop guys and dolls.....er girls. Oh well, I expect that you made a typing error somewhere. Admit it, you were really going to give me 500% instead of 50%. You were? Oh good. I feel so relieved. I mean it really is quite hard work being an intrepid adventurer. Sean Connery never seems to have any difficulty in finding a girlfriend when he stars in James Bond, girls just seem to enjoy waiting outside his door! But I have no such luck, oh no. I usually find myself being cut up by a laser etc when I try to make an advance. Nearly as bad is the fact that my number four hit never made it to the shelves. Stolen by Passionate Patty because it, erm, showed us enjoying each other's company. Fergie eat your heart out! Yeah, now that's an idea! She likes nice, handsome, rich Americans like myself. (By the way whoever is saying "stop dreaming" please shut up!) Briiing, there goes my doorbell now, it could be HER!!!!!! I bet that she can't wait to see my bed....room carpet! It is her! No sleazy photographers if you please. Wait a minute, what's that zoom lens doing? Stop it. Go away. GO AWAY I SAID. That's better. "Oh honey". Quiet Sarah, someone might hear you. I'm so excited, just think, we can go off on lots of really expensive holidays and the PUBLIC will pay for them all. I'll earn loads of money just sitting around occasionally opening supermarkets and visiting hospitals and I won't have to pay tax! Wow, I can't wait until the wedding (you're all invited by the way).

Bye for now, Larry, Laffersville, USA

PS I'd like to mention a friend of mine called Tom Salmond who helped me write this letter.

Well, you can't.

'FURTHER TO THE POINT'

Dear AMIGA POWER,

Further to the point made by James Rogers in AP17 about Special Reserve, I would like to bring to your readers attention the excellent service offered by Software City. Not only are their prices very competitive, but their service is very efficient as well.

Mail order software is not the →

AMIGA GAME winner

'I LIKE THE AMIGA!'

Dear Amiga Power,

Now that the official Super NES is out, I'm getting a little bit worried about the threat of computers dying out and consoles taking over the games scene. Now I'm sure you all think "What's he on about? Computers have all the best original games."

Yeah, us Amiga owners have lots of original games. But recently, these original ideas have been dying out, so we're sticking to old ideas.

"But what about adventures? Consoles haven't got many of those."

True, but take a game like *Monkey Island 2*. Excellent graphics, fab sound, but loads of disk accessing and 11 disks to cope with.

"But hard drives remove the need for this accessing and swapping."

They do, but how many Amiga gamesplayers do you know who have hard drives? Not many. And why? Because they're expensive and you can only put a few large adventures on them.

Games these days don't have much depth either. Look at the size of the *Street Fighter II* cartridge. 16 Megabits! *(Which is, in fact, for the arithmetically-challenged of you out there, 2 Megabytes. A 'Megabit' (or 128K in the real world) is a completely meaningless and made-up term used by Sega to make their games sound better – ask anyone who understands computers to explain to you why a Megabit is a ludicrous and invalid concept, we haven't got the space here. To get back to the point, though, most Amiga games have more than 2 Megabytes of graphic and sound data, never mind the actual game.* Monkey Island 2 *comes on 11 disks, holding 880K each, which is 9.68 Megabytes, or in Segaspeak, 77.44 'Megabits', almost five times the size of* Street Fighter II. *And that's assuming the data hasn't been compressed in any way, in which case it'd be an even bigger number.* Street Fighter II *doesn't sound quite so impressive now, does it? – Ed.)*

"But Amiga games are large – the more disks the better the game".

But that means swapping. *(Not with decent programming, it doesn't. Look at* First Samurai *– Ed.)* Cartridges load instantly and they don't have any swapping. Besides, if I want to play *Street Fighter II* I'll have to either trot down to my local arcade or buy a SNES. I hear that *SFII* is coming out on the Amiga but it most probably won't be anything like the arcade. Now I know it seems like I'm being unfair to the Amiga but consoles have their downsides too. Look at the price of their games. Some are £50! Now that I've got that off my chest I feel much better. What are your views on the subject? I don't want to sell my Amiga and get a SNES or Mega Drive. I like the Amiga! Thanks for your time.

Yours sincerely, Christopher Sterland, Humberstone, Leicester.

PS Will you do an 'in development' feature on *SFII*?

Check out this month's True Stories for the latest SFII *news. As for our views on the subject, well, it's a bit of a matter of horses for courses. The Amiga and the Super NES are both excellent games machines, but in largely different ways – it all depends on what you want to play. If, for example, you want to play* Smash TV *then there's only one machine to do it on – the SNES version is a perfect conversion of the coin-op, the Amiga version just doesn't play like the original. Then again, Amiga* R-Type II *is vastly superior to SNES* Super R-Type *(essentially the same game), without anything like the ridiculous slowing down of the SNES game. You can't play the amazing* Super Mario World *on an Amiga, but you can't play the amazing* Sensible Soccer, Wizkid, Crazy Cars 3, Legend *or* D/Generation *on a SNES. And Amiga games don't cost £50 each. Not yet, anyway. Basically, Chris, you'd be totally daft to sell your Amiga to buy a SNES (and I wouldn't even consider a Mega Drive, to be honest), but if you can afford 'em both, then go for it. You can't have too many games.*

DO THE write THING

only way of obtaining original software economically. I regularly attend All Formats Computer Fairs arranged in my area, and in doing so I have picked up many bargains, for example £10 got me three games – *Hunter, MIG-29* and *Mega lo Mania*, Other bargains to be had included *Spot* at £2.99, *Formula 1 Grand Prix* at £15, *Switchblade 2* at £5 and *Rugby – The World Cup* at £5. For those who do not have access to these fairs, maybe they could take a trip to their local Virgin Megastore, as recently I managed to get *Sensible Soccer* at £19.99 and *SWIV* at £4.99.

The point that I am trying to make is that if people really want lower software prices, they only have to shop around, and not just sit about moaning to any magazine that will listen to them, as is the case with some. Software prices ARE high, but a little effort can make them a little more manageable.

Yours sincerely, Simon Brew, Northfield, Birmingham.

'MY FRIENDS AGREE WITH ME'

Dear AP,

I have been reading your magazines since they first came out. But I would like to share a few ideas. I have noticed in some other magazines they have had a page with drawings of say Soinc *(sic)* punching Mairo *(sic)* in the face. I find this quite funny and good fun to read and my friends agree with me so could you please think about it.

Yours sincerely, Tim Wood, Uckfield

Consider it thought about.

'PUSHED DOWN PEOPLE'S THROATS'

Dear AMIGA POWER,

Computer magazines nowadays are mostly aimed at the older type computer owners. The prices of many magazines costing £3.50 or more. When computer magazines first introduced putting disks on the front cover and charging them accordingly, the reaction was mixed, so as an experiment, one magazine brought out two versions. One with the disk and one without at two different prices.

This gave the reader a choice of what to buy. Unfortunately this didn't last and all magazines ended up and as of now there are only two monthly magazines who do not attach disks which in turn keeps the price down. But of the two, one is aimed for console owners only and the other one looks to be aimed at ten-year-olds.

I think magazines could attempt to please readers by trying to offer their mag with or without disks. The only workable way to approach this is to offer it to all subscribers of that magazine. When people subscribe you could charge £24, say for 12 month's subscription without disks, or £45 for 12 months with disks.

I personally am only interested in the magazine you sell, and not in demo disks or any other disks you put on the front cover. At the moment I will continue to read the reviews quickly standing in the middle of my local newsagent, and then put the mag back for some other reader to do the same or if they wish to pay £3.75 required to buy the mag. I don't think demo disks should be pushed down people's throats. All I want is a good read of a good mag, no strings attached.

Yours sincerely, Paul Jones, Wrexham, Clwyd.

No wonder we have to charge so much, when half of our readers just read the mag in WH Smith's and don't pay for it... Paul, there's nothing we'd like better than to be able to sell AMIGA POWER on the strength of the magazine alone. We happen to think that it's a pretty damn fab magazine, and it's really galling to see people buying dreadful inferior crap purely because it's got something interesting on a coverdisk. Sadly, in the real world, bunging more and more coverdisks on the front of magazines is a proven route to bigger sales and hence higher profits – publishers wouldn't do it otherwise. So you see, the matter's completely out of our hands – if consumers start buying magazines instead of coverdisks (and separating them is a non-starter), the situation will change and maybe we'll all get back to normal. This month's AMIGA POWER, you'll have noticed, has only one coverdisk, and that's the way we hope to continue for the foreseeable future – someone had to take the lead in slowing down the ridiculous 'arms race', and as the undisputed market leader we felt it was down to us. Speaking for the editorial staff here, we hope that Amiga owners will buy AMIGA POWER purely because it's a great magazine, albeit with a a preview-packed disk to boot. Of course, in the end, it's up to you.

'CLEANING OUT MY BEDROOM'

Dear AMIGA POWER,

Not so long ago, I was cleaning out my bedroom when I came across a book entitled Discovering Your ZX Spectrum. I was about to put it on the rubbish heap when I noticed something of interest.

The author of the book was a certain Mark Ramshaw, a name not unlike that of your editor. The publication year was 1984, so I can see that while the Amiga 1000 was just appearing in the shops (or just about to appear) the man who now holds one of the most coveted Amiga journalistic jobs in the country was making his fortune by telling people how to program their Speccys. Hmmmm.

Yours faithfully, Patrick Grady, Inverness.

Oh no! Rumbled! – Mark

'BURIED HIM IN MY COPPER COLLECTION'

Good day to you, kind sirs.

I trust you are in good health and haven't laughed at the 'I can't believe it's not butter' adverts. Now on with the tale.

Over the past two weeks I have been deciding which game I should buy and I finally decided on Core's *Jaguar XJ220* (I already have *Lotus II*), so off I trundle to the computer emporium to find they don't have it in, so I was about to buy a timeshare villa in Bognor when I saw *Crazy Cars III*. I picked it up and promptly threw it at the attendant and said "I'll take it John" (because he had a badge on saying Mike). I went home joyfully after I had buried him in my copper collection.

I booted up and started to ignite latex (or was it burn rubber). Anyway, two days and two ingrowing toenails later I had finished it. "Plith", I said as the end of game sequence told me I had won $10,000,000 and showed me two pictures of my new found wealth. I was left thinking about most end of games and I thought I would look at some.

ask AMIGA POWER

'Yes', 'No', 'I was in the Canary Islands' – just three of the witty answers you could get when you Ask AMIGA POWER...

In games like *Populous* can I link my current A500 with an A600 or an A500Plus to play head to head?
Yours sincerely, Andrew Gardner, Solihull

Probably.

I have a large collection of games for my computer and I would like to know if my games will work on the A600.
Yours sincerely, Andrew Gardner, Solihull

Depends what computer you had before. If it was a Dragon 32, no.

Out of the A500Plus and the A600 which is better?
Yours sincerely, Andrew Gardner, Solihull

The A600 is a nicer colour, but the A500P holds down more stuff if you use it as a paperweight. Hope this helps.

What possessed you to make *Rainbow Islands* the all time number one game?
Yours sincerely, Andrew Gardner, Solihull

The Devil.

Could you please make the magazine cheaper?
Yours sincerely, Andrew Gardner, Solihull

We did.

How do you install a Citizen 224 printer onto the workbench?
Yours sincerely, Andrew Gardner, Solihull

No idea.

Can I have a T-shirt free of charge please?
Yours sincerely, Andrew Gardner, Solihull

No.

Can I have free copies of *Monkey Island 1* and *2*?
Yours, Ben King, Preston

No.

Aren't Core Design and Team 17 the best two groups ever?
Yours faithfully, John Chapman, Toxteth

We tend to prefer The Jesus And Mary Chain and the Jimi Hendrix Experience around here, actually.

SIGNED PHOTO winner

'TOTALLY CUTE MARK'

Dear AP

One day I was looking through your brilliant ace mag. I had a look at Who Do We Think We Are? and showed some of my friends. We all thought that the picture of Mark Ramshaw was really cute. A couple of issues later I saw The Show Must Go On! Did I see the totally cute Mark? You bet I didn't. I saw someone who needed a shave, didn't brush his hair and had great need of a fashion advisor! (Sorry Mark, it had to be said). Oh well I'd better close. By the way I think your magazine is brill and I've told all other Amiga owners. *(Blimey, that must have taken ages – Ed.)*
Yours, Cheryl Anderson, Coxwold, Yorks
PS Sorry about the spelling, I'm only 10.

**Was that you, Rich Pelley, showing off on the spring board in St Austell swimming pool on 29th July?
Yours sincerely, Ben Vowles, Blagdon**

No, I was in the Canary Islands – Rich.

**Dear AMIGA POWER,
Is it practical to paint your Amiga into a more fashionable colour scheme, removing the dull grey John Major look of the Amiga and replacing it with a landscape of colour unparalleled in Western culture?
Yours in anticipation, Wavy Davy Cruickshank, Ayrshire, Scotland**

Yes.

**I own one of every issue of AP and two copies of issue eight. As a reward for my loyalty, can you print the letter 'D' on the spine of the next issue so I can spell 'MIAOW I AM A GRAPE GOD' on my bookshelf?
Yours sincerely, Ben Twitchen, Southend-On-Sea**

We'll think about it.

Rodland – two pictures of mom, Tam and Rit.
Robocod – Dr Maybe gets a sack on his head and Santa and Robocod jump up and down – big deal.
On No! More Lemmings – I am crowned a master *Lemmings* player and I get a picture of the DMA mob and they clap all in wonderful Digitise-O-Rama.
Lotus II – I'm treated to a look at the two people who wrote the game. Awesome.
Kick Off 2 – Not!
Double Dragon II – Some girl crying, overcome with emotion.

So the ends of games are pathetic, it's official. But thanks for the recommendation on *CC3* as I will be playing it for years to come.
What IS pink, fluffy and unemployed?
Tarrarr, Ben King, Preston, Lancs

Ah, well, that's Barbara (Snip! – Mary Whitehouse)

'ABOUT MAGIC POCKETS'

Dear AMIGA POWER,
I am writing to congratulate you on your brill magazine. It is THE magazine for Amiga gamers. You also seem to get hold of the best playable demos I have ever seen, *Exile* being my favourite with *Pinball Dreams* and *Legend* following close behind. By the way is there anyway I can get hold of the full game of *Exile*, I haven't seen it anywhere. I noticed in Letters, AP12 that Stuart made some rather cutting comments about Amiga games. *(But it wasn't me! It was Colin! Honest! – Stuart.)* I have to say that I partly agree with him (which makes a change). There are a lot of crap games out on the Amiga and the Amiga gets rubbish games just as any other machine. There is something though about some 8-bit games which Amiga programmers sometimes can't match (playability, what's that). Just look at the C64 classic *Creatures*, this outdoes most of the games currently circulating on the Amiga (although its sequel wasn't quite up to scratch) and if Thalamus decide to convert this game to the Amiga they would probably make a hash up of it trying to improve on an already brilliant concept. The other half of Stuart's comments though I do not agree with, Amiga games aren't overrated in your reviews! You give the fairest and sensible marks of any magazine and you definitely outline which games to get and which to avoid. I read the feature on what programmers thought of AMIGA POWER in issue 17 with great interest but I laughed when I read Eric Matthews' comment. I knew he would get something in about *Magic Pockets* he has been moaning about that to other magazines! (Not that I read any of course). In fact I would say that issue 17 is probably the best issue so far (and I've got them all). I particularly enjoyed Stuart's feature on multi player games, the bit showing typical comments that are shouted when each game is being played was hilarious, and accurate. Well I will stop waffling now and leave you with a cheat for *Top Secret* by The Hidden. When playing, press F10 to end the level. That's it, so keep up the great work and encourage me to renew my subscription!
Yours Mark Smith, Oswestry, Shropshire

Oh go on, Mark, renew your subscription. How's that?

'DISASTROUS POSSIBILITY'

Dear AP,
I am writing to you on the subject of change, which is why I must start by saying that yours is the best and most reliable mag on the market. You've talked of changing things recently, and while change is not necessarily a bad thing, I feel it would be more wise for you to add rather than to swap. However these are not the changes that I'm most worried about. I'm worried about changes in standards. May I now draw a comparison between Amiga Power and Amiga Action. You are renowned for harsh reviewing, yet still giving credit where credit is due, which in my opinion (and probably that of most of your readers) is the best way to do it.

I remember when Amiga Action was a hard marking magazine. Their highest mark was 93% to a certain *Kick Off 2* and their second highest was 90% to *It Came From the Desert*. As you may have noticed they now give ridiculous scores such as 98% to a game barely worth 70% (*Jaguar XJ220*) and rating this and the over-rated *Lotus II* as better games than Sir Geoff's *F1GP*.

So where is the similarity? It is here. You have just given *Rainbow Islands* 96% and said that *Sensible Soccer* was under-rated at 93%. Now we are all aware of your views of these games, and I am not going to argue with them now (especially not with *SS*), but I must draw your attention to the disastrous possibility of AP following in the footsteps of Amiga Action.

I feel that you owe it to the 60,000 or so people who buy your magazine to keep your reviewing harsh, remembering the high price of software, and to remain the only truly reliable magazine around.
I hope you will keep these points in mind for the future.
Yours sincerely, Paul Sheriffs, Northwood

You say it yourself, Paul – we give credit where credit's due. Sensible Soccer *is a true landmark game (as I think its placing in the soon-to-come Readers' All-Time Top 100 will show), and to give it any less than a mark reflecting that would have been a travesty. Similarly,* Rainbow Islands *is currently our official Best Amiga Game Of All Time, and I don't think 96% for the best game ever is an over-rating. Don't worry, we're not going soft, but we're not going to be artificially mean to brilliant games just to make ourselves look tough and butch.*

'I LOVE READING'

Dear AP,
I would like to give some advice to AP readers who own a single drive and a PAL TV.

A few months ago, I was playing *EOBII* which is excellent and I don't care what Karl Foster's review says because I need to make up a spell to get me free software – hint. After a while, the number of disk swaps was getting into my head.

I soon had a brainwave, so the next time I played *EOBII*, I made a note of the disk number every time I disk swapped. The next time I was loading *EOBII* I was watching the Captain Planet cartoon my PAL monitor whilst changing disks (don't laugh it's better than Open University). I know when to swap disks as the floppy disk light turns off. I hope this helps some Amiga owners.

I love reading the letters pages because the Ed's quips crack me up (may I have a free copy of *Captain Planet*?) *(No – Ed.)* Only one problem, there are just not enough cheats. You supply over 30 pages of very readable game reviews and only eight measly pages of cheats. I should know, I got top marks in my mental arithmetic GCSE!
Yours modestly, Vicki Kong, Hornchurch, Essex

GCSEs? I see.

'INSIST ON CHURNING'

Dear AMIGA POWER,
Why do software houses insist on churning out rubbish every time an important event happens? Just after the European Cup there were so many awful football games that had a weak link to the Euro Cup and were just sad variations of each other (with the exception of *Sensible Soccer* of course). There have even been a couple of games on the theme of Columbus!

Amazingly only one piece of software has been released on the Olympic theme, namely *International Sports Challenge*, but I'm almost certain there will be more of the same hitting the shelves very soon. How many of you out there are still crying over the thought of *Italy 90*? It's pointless, do programmers seriously think they can cash in on rushed, unplayable software just because it slightly ties in with the event it supposedly depicts? I think not.
Yours, Ben Vowles, Blagdon, Avon.

DO THE write THING

'I'M SICK OF PEOPLE'

Dear AMIGA POWER,
I wish Mindscape good luck with *D/Generation* and hope they sell thousands of copies because the effort to sell a game for £19.95 should be rewarded. I guess I'll get a copy myself. However I think that prices won't come down if there are more people buying games. See for example *EOBII*. Where is the reason to charge an extra £5 compared to *EOB*? The one meg more gameplay? Surely not because all the system was worked out and they just had to make a new game around it. I can only suggest to everyone living in London to get their games in that small software shop on Oxford Street. They charge you £5 less on each game as long as it is in the top 10. Or look at Nintendo and Sega consoles. From day to day more machines are sold. Are the prices of cartridges coming down just a penny? Nope!

I also have to say that I'm sick of people saying £25, £30 is dear for a game. Come on! You have to pay £7 to go to see a film *(Not in the cinemas round here, you don't – Incredulous Ed.)* that lasts two hours. A good game gives you weeks of entertainment. And there are only so many games worth buying. I've bought about 10 games in the last two years and they were all to my liking. I didn't regret to buy any of them *(EOB, EOBII, Populous II, Black Crypt, Cadaver, Gods, Monkey Island* to name but a few) so I payed about £10 every month for hours and hours of entertainment. And the price of your magazine? Come on! Here in Germany they charge you £9 for a copy. That's why I subscribed (and you'd better send me the promised game). One last question, what happened to the Bitmap's *Chaos Engine*?
Thanks for your patience, Dieter Kremer, Germany

News of The Chaos Engine *is on page 23*

'I DON'T CARE'

Dear AP
I've been reading through all the whinging letters in 'Do The Write Thing' this month and decided to have a whinge myself, about – wow! – the price of games.

It took a lot of courage for me to write this letter as I have to admit that I went out and bought the *Viz* game (it's funny how the comic is utterly brilliant but the game is crap but there you go). Anyway my point is I paid full price for my copy of *Viz* and also *Pang* a few months back but have now discovered that they have been re-released as budget games – was I jarred or what! Surely if a game can be re-released as budget it must be possible to sell it cheap in the first place. I mean is there any difference between the budget and the full price games?

Also, when you look through AP →

BURNT UNION JACK winner

'EXCEPT THE QUEEN, MAYBE'

Dear AMIGA POWER,

Recently in your magazine there have been quite a few important issues that have been discussed which have interested a lot of people. Firstly the question of graphics in computer games. Frankly your pathetic view that gameplay only matters but not graphics or sound at all is monstrously outdated! Isn't it about time you lot faced up to reality and the '90s? Why do you bother to write for an Amiga magazine at all? There are plenty of 8-bitters to choose from. After all that's where all "the best playability" is supposed to be. (As well as relatively poor graphics for you lot to feel right at home with)

Graphics and sound capabilities are two of the Amiga's strongest credentials, indeed they are what it is most famous for, and what people REALLY buy them for, and so should be greatly encouraged, not muted as you lot seem to be doing. Quality titles like *Gods*, the like of which we rarely see, should also be encouraged, but you do not. Criminal or what! If you don't like the heat, stay out of the kitchen. *(What on Earth are you wibbling on about? Heat? Kitchen? Hello? Anybody home? – Ed)*

Considering the Amiga's capabilities, there is nowadays absolutely NO excuse for a game to have sub-standard aesthetics, or indeed gameplay if the software houses expect us to continue paying the extortionate prices for their games that we do. Bad aesthetics smacks of plain laziness or concentrating too much on gameplay or other aspects of a game during production, whilst neglecting others.

My advice is to wake up and support the cause. *(Yeah! And smash the state, too! – Wolfie Smith.)* Also I have frequently read about Amiga programmers and designers becoming disillusioned with the 16-bit market and abandoning ship in favour of the consoles. This is very worrying indeed. But really I cannot see how console or in particular Mega Drive games will ever outsell Amiga ones or how more money will be made from them (in Europe at least). The reason for this is that they are simply so bloody over-expensive and such a rip-off that hardly anyone can afford to buy them (except the Queen maybe).

How console companies have the nerve to charge prices of up to £50 and over for mostly average cartridges is beyond belief and completely and utterly disgraceful. Especially (as you rightly pointed out last issue) when they are compared to the prices of other entertainment mediums like CDs and videos.

How many people do you know with loads of console games each? Not many eh? Perhaps these traitor programmers have the old dollar sign in their eyes. People can't afford them so much over here. Outselling here? No way!

Finally, why does every game you review these days have to be completely original to be any good? The main thing (as you lot keep telling us) is that games are fun, original or not. Original idea games are great but don't forget that many of these can turn out to be rather crap (*Graeme Souness Vector Soccer* for one).

Yours sincerely, Mark Bobowicz, Crystal Palace, London

Oh for God's sake Mark, get a life! We don't think crap graphics are a great thing, of course we'd rather all games had fabulous graphics, all we've ever said is that if a game's brilliant fun to play, it doesn't really matter what it looks like. As for Gods, *we gave it 87 bloody percent! If that's not 'encouraging' 'quality' games, I don't know what is. And as for 'concentrating too much on gameplay'... how can you possibly concentrate 'too much' on gameplay? Gameplay is everything, Mark, it's what games are all about! If you just want to look at pretty pictures, go to a bloody art gallery! Also, if you can't see how consoles will ever outsell or out-profit Amiga games, then you're even more blinkered than you sound from your letter.* Super Mario Brothers 3 *(on the useless, crap-graphics, 8-bit NES, no less) sold over 7,000,000 copies in the first year of release, in the USA alone! The software industry doesn't give a monkey's about 'in Europe at least', so stop fooling yourself. Programmers, like software houses and everybody else in the world, will go where the money is. They couldn't care less if they sell their games in America or Japan, as long as they sell them and get paid for it. You're the one who needs to wake up, Mark – 1992 is no time to get all parochial. The British Empire died a long time ago.*

If people like you had their way – insisting on graphics and sound being the only considerations for a good game – then the Amiga (and pretty much every other computer AND the cheaper consoles) would have died quite some time ago. The Amiga can't compete with the new generation in terms of pure tech-specs, but what it can do is produce incomparably great games, with the kind of imagination that you almost never see from the play-it-safe console megacorporations of Nintendo and Sega. That's where the Amiga's future lies, not in trying to be all bullish and state-of-the-art with technology that's over seven years old. That said, I don't see where you get the ridiculous notion that we're hung up on originality from. The highest marks we've ever given to full-price games went to Populous II *(a sequel) and* Sensible Soccer *(a football game – that's original). For your own sake, get out a bit. There's a whole world out here.*

at the companies who sell games they are about seven quid cheaper than the High Street shops and local computer shops. Surely they're not selling these games cheap just for the fun of it, they must be making some profit, so the High Street stores etc who sell the games at full price not only make the normal profit mark up but also an extra seven quid on top! And it's schmucks like me who pay for them!

I know most of us go on about how we haven't got any money and how we can't afford these games etc and still go out and blow our last few bob on them but if the big companies lowered their prices most people would buy more games. And if the prices were reasonable it would cut out the need (not that I'm condoning it) for the Long John Silvers out there. So all in all these companies would probably make more profit by reducing their prices!

Anyway that's it. No doubt if you think my whinge is a load of crap you'll chuck it in the bin or if I'm lucky you'll print it with some pathetic little quotes from the Ed throughout the letter or something sarky at the end. But I don't care.

Yours sincerely, Niky Griffiths, Peterborough

'HELLO JOHN, IT'S YOUR MUM HERE'

Dear AP,

I am one of those rare people who do not spend any/all of their leisure time in front of a computer screen. I have never held a joystick in my hand and experienced its pulsating appeal. I am in fact not even an AMIGA POWER buyer. I do not know the difference between a bit, a byte or a butt. Yet the word 'Amiga' is at the very epicentre of my life.

I am, of course, the mother of a teenage Amiga fan and would like to communicate through your pages to my errant offspring.

Hello John, it's your mum here – remember me? The one who fearlessly handles your socks and writes your 'I'm sorry my son is late' notes when you've stayed up all night playing on your Amiga.

Do you remember before we got your computer, how we used to communicate with our mouths? It was much better than the system now. You know the one, where you grunt and periodically make that sign with your hand, and then disappear and reappear shielded behind this mag? It was before you regressed into your primitive period that you're in now, just opening your bedroom door a fraction and snatching food. Once we all ate together in a room called a kitchen. We'd sit at a table and you'd use a knife and fork, successfully. It was before you got that terrible tremor in your right hand which makes you cry out 'Got it!' constantly.

And you used to come out with us occasionally in our car and we'd be known as what they call a 'family'. You know, we'd go to places like the National Trust and pretend to understand why it was so important to preserve a fifteenth century urinal in mint condition.

Remember your little sister? I think she is learning a new form of communication too. She wears these things on her ears permanently and can only seem to communicate through the phone to her friends. When she doesn't have the things on her ears she plays her music so loud I think it must be out of consideration for other aliens, so they can hear it without their ear things on too.

Your father is worried about you, he is sure you've taken up with bad company. He overheard you talking about Rolling Ronnie and he didn't like the sound of it at all. If we can, we'd do anything to help you crack the addiction, you can join Amiga Anonymous which meets in the disused cinema. It's got a huge screen, shows previews, and has the obligatory mouse, too.

Please try to remember your pre-Amiga days, because if not I'll have to start learning to play, and say 'crap!' every other sentence.

Yours in desperation, Mum (alias Rosemary Walker), crap! (oops, hooked already), address withheld to protect the innocent.

AND ANOTHER THING...

Kadie Armstrong of Ashford – thanks for the Sim Toad animation, it was much better than the inevitable tedium of playing computer games all day.

Chris Wood of Bromley – cheers, you made our day (especially Stuart's).

Donald Leung-Cheun of New Malden – call US Gold on 021 625 3388 if you want to find out about *Crack Down*.

Bill Hewett of Milford in the USA – as far as we know, we don't have any US distributor, so we're afraid the best advice we can offer is don't miss any issues... And as for games, apparently the US Amiga market isn't really big enough to justify all the bother and expense, or something.

Paul Sheriffs of Northwood – we wish that too, but Matt Bielby wouldn't let us.

Stuart Tomlinson of Manchester – er, well, sort of a little bit like *Bloodwych*, really. Okay?

Andrew Laycock of Accrington – how can we possibly 'not review' a game and give it 15% at the same time? You clot.

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THE BOTTOM LINE

These days, no one can afford to shell out thirty quid on a game and just hope for the best. We've got to weigh up the pros and cons and plan our purchases carefully. But where can these elusive pros and cons be found? Here, in...

THE BOTTOM LINE
(AND HOW TO UNDERSTAND IT)

★★★★★ Excellent ★★★★★ Nearly there ★★★★ Very good
★★★ Has its moments ★★ Flawed ★ Dire

The whole point of the Bottom Line is to cram as much information as possible into this small space. Here's how it works...
The top bit is easy:
GAME NAME
Publisher Price

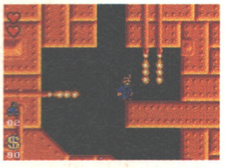
Then we get (just for your information really) the issue of AMIGA POWER in which the game was originally reviewed, the mark it got at the time and the reviewer's initials. If the game appeared in our new, updated All-time Top 100 Games, its position comes next, followed by the mini-review and a rating out of five stars (with red ones for real 'must buys'.) And there you have it – all you could ever possibly need to know about just about every full price game you're ever slightly likely to think about buying.

WHO'S WHO AP – Adam Peters ● CC - Colin Campbell ● DG - Dave Golder ● GP - Gary Penn ● JD - Jonathan Davies ● KF - Karl Foster ● LB – Linda Barker ● LE – Les Ellis ● MB - Matt Bielby ● MR - Mark Ramshaw ● MS - Matthew Squires ● NW - Neil West ● RL – Richard Longhurst ● RP - Rich Pelley ● RR – Ronnie Randall ● SC - Stuart Campbell

ABANDONED PLACES
Electronic Zoo £29.99

AP11 80% KF
Definitely one of the biggest RPGs you'll ever play, but as you might expect, that means an awful lot of fiddling about with disks. It looks a bit tacky too, but you certainly get plenty of game for your money. ★★★★

THE ADDAMS FAMILY
Ocean £25.99



AP14 88% MB
Highly simplified *Mario* clone, but no less playable for all that. Huge and tough, and while it looks a bit bare in places, there's no shortage of things going on. A goody for sure. ★★★★★

ADVANTAGE TENNIS
Infogrames £25.99
AP12 69% DG
We're still waiting for the definitive Amiga tennis game. This is up there with the best of the contenders, but poor controls let it down. ★★★

THE ADVENTURES OF WILLY BEAMISH
Sierra £34.99
AP12 69% MR
Great plot with some genuinely funny touches of humour, but the game itself is straightforward and linear. For £35, it's a bit short on depth to justify buying. ★★★

AGONY
Psygnosis £25.99

AP13 78% SC
The mellowest shoot-'em-up around, with stunning graphics, beautiful animation and relaxed, blissed-out gameplay (but utterly tragic music). The six levels won't take you all that long to get through, though, so think carefully if you're after a real challenge. ★★★★

AIR BUCKS
Impressions £29.99
AP17 70% MR
Fighting for supremacy of the skies can be a messy business, especially when it's peacetime and you run a commercial airline. This is an intriguing and engrossing business sim but you need to make too many allowances for sloppy programming for it to be 'fun'. ★★★

ALCATRAZ
Infogrames £25.99
AP13 73% NW
A bit of a pain in one-player mode (you have to play two characters simultaneously), but much more fun with a chum around, this maze game/shoot-'em-up is atmospheric and addictive, if not the biggest thing you'll ever see. Not bad. ★★★

ALIEN BREED
Team 17 £25.99
AP8 82% RP
Ultra-slick *Gauntlet* clone – it gets a bit repetitive but there's a huge amount of top slimy-slaughtering fun to be had beforehand. Not much evidence of one meg being used though. ★★★

ALIEN STORM
US Gold £25.99
AP9 44% NW
Imagine something as simple as *Golden Axe* without the clever sophisticated stuff. Yep, it's really that dreadful. ★

AMERICAN FOOTBALL COACH
Composer Software £14.95
AP14 21% NW
John Madden Football without the groovy graphics, exciting strategy/arcade blend, competent programming and pretty much everything else. ★

AMNIOS
Psygnosis £25.99
AP9 76% MR
Inspired by arcade classics *Defender* and *Sinistar*, but this omni-directional-scrolling blaster is over-fast, under-controllable and graphically very cluttered. Reasonable fun, but utterly forgettable. ★★★

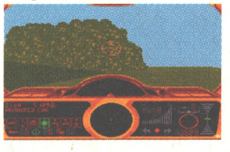
ANOTHER WORLD
US Gold £25.99
AP10 89% MR T100 No.20
Okay, so you'll finish it in a couple of days, but this is absolutely gorgeous stuff, playable and different with an atmosphere all its own. Every new screen is an exciting discovery, and while quantity may be lacking, there's no doubting this one's quality. Let's just hope for a (bigger) sequel soon. ★★★★★

APIDYA
Play Byte £25.99

AP13 89% MR T100 No.25
We can't agree whether this is the best Amiga horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-up ever or only the second-best (its rival is the terminally cool *R-Type 2*), but it's definitely completely excellent, so why are you reading this instead of going out to the shops to buy it right now? Eh? ★★★★★

AQUAVENTURA
Psygnosis £25.99
AP16 38% AP
Over-hyped, nice-looking but repetitive and shallow 3D shoot-'em-up. Okay as an ambient relaxation tool but if that's what you're after, try fitting a coloured light bulb. ★★

ASHES OF EMPIRE
Mirage £34.99



AP16 80% RL
Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to bring peace and stability to the Confederation of Syndicalist Republics (a not very well disguised USSR/CIS sort of place). *Ashes* is one of those strategy role-playing games that people tend to be scared of, but despite being vast and complicated, it's surprisingly easy to get into and curiously addictive. ★★★★

A320 AIRBUS
Thalion £29.99
AP13 66% DG
You know how people say that if you want to play arcade games, you must have a console? Horrific image-wrecking trainspotter guff like this is the reason why. If you want to fly, go in a plane, don't buy an Amiga. 'Realistic'? Well maybe, but who cares? ★

BABY JO
Loriciel £24.99
AP8 49% MB
It's after you've played *A320 Airbus* that *Baby Jo* starts to look not quite so bad after all. It's a bit primitive and a bit simplistic, but it's cute and it's got a sense of humour, and you can do a lot worse than that in this bad old world. ★★

BACKGAMMON ROYALE
Oxford Softworks £19.99
AP12 45% JD
Too thin a game to justify this price, and no use as a learning tool thanks to the horrible, confusing instruction manual. Buy a real Backgammon set and a decent book on the subject, it's better and cheaper. ★

BARBARIAN 2
Psygnosis £25.99

AP9 68% SC
Too little too late, this pretty little arcade adventure is completely lacking in action or challenge. Unless you found *Shadow Of The Beast* a bit too complicated for your liking, you'll get bored very swiftly. ★★★

BATTLE ISLE
Ubi Soft £29.99
AP9 78% SC
A really nice idea, with an excellent control interface, but it falls at the last hurdle thanks to some enormous delays during play and a badly thought-out combat system. There's the germ of a real classic in here, though. ★★★

BATTLE ISLE SCENARIO DISK ONE
Ubi Soft £19.99
AP18 78% MR
As data disks go this one is good value for money. *Battle Isle* fans, this is the place to come for lots more scenarios and lots more playing time. ★★★

BIG RUN
Storm £25.99
AP11 61% DG
With *Lotus II*, *Vroom*, and *Lotus I* on budget, do you really need this third-rate conversion of a second-rate arcade driving game? No, we didn't think so. ★★

BIRDS OF PREY
Electronic Arts £34.99
AP9 81% JD
Incredibly detailed and comprehensive, but the incredibly slow frame update gets in the way just too much for all but the real flight game purist. Lots to see and do (and shoot) if you're really patient though. ★★★

BLACK CRYPT
Electronic Arts £25.99
AP11 85% GP
Real RPG devotees don't seem to go for it – preferring the likes of the *Beholder* games, but there appears to be something about this one which draws in the uninitiated. It's nothing new, but give it a try – you might like it... ★★★

THE BLUES BROTHERS
Titus £25.99

AP7 87% SC T100 No.26
Funny, addictive, colossally playable, crisp and beautiful-looking, gorgeously presented, excellently-designed and magnificently-written. But that's enough about AMIGA POWER, *The Blues Brothers* is fab as well. Our favourite character licence game ever. John Belushi would have approved. ★★★★★

BONANZA BROS
US Gold £25.99
AP9 81% GP
Good conversion of the coin-op, but for some reason it's just not as lovable on home computer formats. Two-player mode is really good fun, but in solo mode it's lacking a bit. A touch slow, and the 10 levels can be played through in no time. ★★★

BOOLY
Loriciel £19.99
AP8 64% MB
Characterful and imaginative little thing, but you really need to force yourself to play it properly. It's quite engrossing, but it's never going to be a No.1. ★★★

BOROBODUR
Thalamus £25.99
AP11 34% SC
Really awful platform game, tied onto reasonably neat driving section which isn't good enough to suffer the horrors before it for. Really badly programmed too. ★

BREACH 2 (ENHANCED)
Impressions £29.99
AP10 60% RP
Spectrum-quality graphics, but a more entertaining game than many in the RPG genre. £30 is just silly, though. ★★★

BRIDES OF DRACULA
Gonzo Games £25.99
AP13 59% MS
Astoundingly crude technically, the execution and some elementary design flaws ruin what might have been some top *Spy vs Spy*-esque vampire antics. ★

BUG BOMBER
DMI £25.99

AP17 70% SC
Er, well basically it's *Dyna Blaster* with twiddly bits. It's slightly better than *Dyna Blaster* as a one-player game but *DB* beats it for multi-player fun and good looks. Overall, though, dead fab. ★★★★★

BUILDERLAND
Loriciel £24.99
AP8 63% MB
Potentially groovy *Lemmings*-type effort, but it's a shame it appears to have been programmed in AMOS. Still quite playable, but too primitive to really hold your attention. ★★★

CALIFORNIA GAMES II
US Gold £25.99
AP18 52% RR
This will receive a fair recommendation when it arrives in the budget bin where it belongs. The only truly surprising thing about *California Games II* is the price. £25.99? Get real, dudes. ★★

CAPTAIN PLANET
Mindscape £25.99
AP8 43% NW
Really tragic platform atrocity licensed from one of the lamest cartoon heroes in living memory. Shoddily put-together and a complete waste of a potentially good design. ★

CARDIAXX
Electronic Zoo £25.99
AP9 59% SC
It's nice to see someone try to do a *Defender* for the '90s, but not so nice when it turns out to be as characterless and unplayable as this. Wildly over-sensitive and illogical in play. ★

CARL LEWIS CHALLENGE
Psygnosis £25.99

AP17 83% DG
These days, sports sims of all descriptions come with a management section. This one does but it isn't really worth playing. The sports bits are presented very well but are too easy. And there's no head-to-head option in multi-player mode. Okay, but flawed. ★★★

THE CASTLE OF DOCTOR BRAIN
Sierra £34.99

AP18 61% DG
If you want to expand your kids' minds then this is no bad way to go about it. It's just a pity that it's so damned slow and difficult to control. Not a very large game. ★★

CASTLES
Interplay £29.99
AP13 58% KF
Could-have-been-fun attempt at a *Sim City*-style epic with castles (surprise!) in it, but it's all too painfully slow and it doesn't even balance the lack of speed with any real depth or realism. ★★

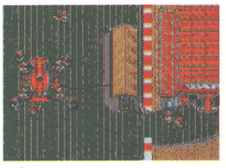
CATCH 'EM
DMI £25.99

AP18 69% RP
If you enjoyed the totally bizarre concepts of *Lemmings* or *Goblins* then perhaps you could make something of *Catch 'Em* too. Try it, you might like it. ★★★

CELTIC LEGENDS
Ubi Soft £30.99

AP9 89% KF T100 No.27
Fans of the 8-bit classic *Chaos* will find that this is the closest the Amiga's yet come to emulating that game's timeless appeal, but with added depth and strategy. A little on the slow side, but enormously compelling and enjoyable nevertheless. ★★★★★

CHAMPION DRIVER
Idea £25.99



AP9 75% SC
Fast and smooth cross between *Hot Rod* and *Super Sprint*, this is pretty shallow stuff but it's one of the most enjoyable Amiga driving games you'll see all the same. There's a good balance between achievement and reward too. ★★★★

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER
Domark £24.99
AP15 38% JD
A very tedious and boring attempt at the football management genre. There's absolutely no football action, but there is a ridiculous amount of disk accessing. Don't waste your money, you'd get more satisfaction flushing it down the toilet. Try Chrysalis' *Graham Taylor Management* game instead. ★

CHE: GUERRILLA IN BOLIVIA
CCS £25.99
AP10 34% RP
About as up-to-date as Che himself. Forget it. ★

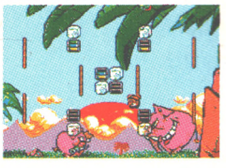
CHESS CHAMPION 2175
Oxford Softworks £19.99
AP12 80% KF
Millions of options, loads of difficulty settings, easy to get into, good-looking and instructive, this is almost certainly the best Amiga chess game yet. ★★★★

CISCO HEAT
Image Works £25.99
AP10 66% SC
It's hard to tell if the programmers ever played the coin-op this is supposedly based on, but it's not a bad little arcade driving game in its own right. Then again, it's not exactly good, either. ★★★

CIVILIZATION
MicroProse £34.99

AP16 80% GP
The idea of god-sims, and this one in particular, is very appealing. Few of them really hit the mark, though, and this is one of those that just misses. The interface is a living nightmare of hell, but inside that shoddy body there beats a heart of gold. It's dull and flat to look at but in the end it's such a good idea. Okay if you're patient, but why should you have to be? ★★★

THE COOL CROC TWINS
Arcade Masters £25.99



AP16 65% MS
A mad and bizarre headbanging extravaganza of platforming crocodile antics. It's bright, colourful and arcadey, but there are too many levels and not enough gameplay variety to keep you entertained for very long. ★★★

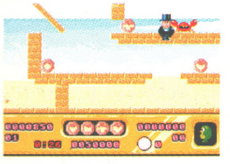
COVER GIRL POKER
Emotional Pictures/Storm £25.99
AP13 6% MR
A completely amazing game. You'll be amazed at the poor-quality pictures, astounded by the tacky dialogue, and utterly staggered at how unbelievably bad it is at poker. If you own it, kill yourself. ★

COVERT ACTION
MicroProse £34.99
AP8 81% SC T100 No. 99
Ridiculously expensive but very atmospheric spy 'simulator', with lots of little sub-games (some of which are actually enjoyable, shock horror) actually going together to make a cohesive whole. Shame about that price, though. ★★★★

CRAZY CARS III
Titus £25.99

AP16 88% MR
Probably the best racing game yet – pure arcade fun. It succeeds. A great difficulty curve, excellent power-ups, wonderfully evocative graphics (Boston really looks like Boston) and great sounds. Let down slightly by the lack of a two-player option but otherwise fab. ★★★★★

CRAZY SEASONS
Idea £25.99



AP17 73% LB
Cutesy, platform puzzler featuring a pot-bellied penguin trying to save the universe. Not exceptionally original but very playable. ★★★★

CRIME CITY
If... £25.99
AP11 30% GP
Nice detective murder-mystery idea, but useless plot development and unpleasant user interface. This could have been good, if only it had had a bit of atmosphere to it. ★

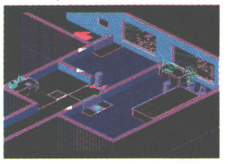
CRIME TIME
Starbyte £25.99
AP9 32% RP
Hopeless adventure game, old-fashioned and unoriginal. Really, with the likes of *Monkey Island* around, we don't quite understand why people bother releasing this kind of drivel at all. ★

CYBERBLAST
Innerprise Software Inc £25.99
AP17 61% GP
Uninspired *Gauntlet* clone. Scrolly, mazey, shooty thing that plays well enough but isn't overly interesting. ★★★

DEATHBRINGER
Empire £25.99
AP9 54% SC
Wildly impressive 32-level parallax, but there's nothing else to it at all. Even the gameplay that there is (simple hack'n'slash stuff) isn't very well executed. More of a demo than a game. ★★

DELIVERANCE
21st Century Entertainment £25.99
AP14 75% JD
Cruder, more colourful version of *Gods*, without the depth but with a bit more zing to it. ★★★

D/GENERATION
Mindscape £19.95



AP16 88% JD
You wouldn't have thought you'd get much of a game out of being a dispatch rider in a genetic engineering lab, but Mindscape have managed it, and for only £19.95. It has elegant and perfectly balanced gameplay with just the right amount of puzzle-solving, shooting stuff, and leaping around. Not so hot in the sound effects or graphics departments but it packs an addictive punch that could easily knock a few teeth out. ★★★★★

DISCOVERY
Impressions £29.99
AP15 75% JD
Ships, history, and the anniversary of Columbus' 'discovery' of America. It's a pretty strange subject for a game, but then the American people have become a very strange sort of race. "Celebrate Columbus' anniversary on the Amiga". Quite. ★★★★

DOJO DAN
Europress Software £25.99

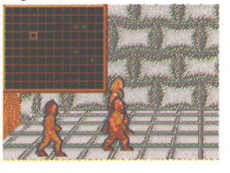
AP16 66% GP
A better than mediocre platform-romp-cum-beat-'em-up thang with some shoot-'em-up shenanigans thrown in for good measure. It can be frustrating to play at times but it can be moderately entertaining too. It's no classic but it has it's moments and is quite pretty to look at. ★★★

DOUBLE DRAGON III
Storm £25.99
AP9 29% SC
While the first two *Double Dragon* games were simplistic and over-easy, at least they looked quite nice. This is much less complex than either of those, and a lot uglier too. ★

DRAGON FIGHTER
Idea £25.99
AP9 56% JD
Novel mix of two styles (*R-Type*ish shoot-'em-up and strategy game), but neither section has been very well executed. The whole thing is pretty slick, but there's nothing much here to keep you entertained for long. ★★

DREADNOUGHTS
Turcan Research Systems £34.95
AP14 80% JD
A naval strategy wargame that Jonathan liked? Nurse! ★★★★

DUNE
Virgin £30.99



AP15 81% DG
A highly polished adventure game which is more of a strategy game-cum-animated-book. It should appeal to adventure fans, and non-gaming fans of the book, alike. ★★★★

DYLAN DOG
Simulmondo £25.99
AP16 29% RP
There are loads of extras (graphics and sound) but there isn't really much of a game for them to be attached to. Weird, boring and expensive. Give it a miss. ★

DYNA BLASTER
Ubi Soft £30.99

AP12 83% MB T100 No.13
Good fun by itself, but play this in five-player mode (with the joystick adaptor included) and you'll find entire days disappearing from your life. If you've got any friends at all, this is an absolute must. ★★★★★

ELVIRA – THE ARCADE GAME
Flair £25.99
AP10 70% NW
Sort of like a prettier but much cruder version of *Gods*. Not bad, but not exactly thrilling, it's yet another of those 'okayish' jobs (you should know the drill by now). ★★★

ELVIRA II: THE JAWS OF CEREBUS
Accolade £34.99
AP13 33% GP
Totally dull and unexciting (surely the very last thing a game about the larger-than-life Elvira should be) million-disk adventure, and shockingly priced. ★

EPIC
Ocean £30.99
AP15 34% KF
Put that wallet away. The only thing that's epic about this one is is how long we've had to wait for it. It scores on the graphics, and can be fun, but really – it's no game. ★

ESPAÑA GAMES '92
Ocean £29.99
AP17 38% MS
Huge variety of events but getting to them is a real chore. And they don't look too hot when you manage it. Not really worth the bother. ★

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS
Idea £25.99
AP17 4% SC
Our lowest ever mark. Nuff said? ★

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP
Elite £25.99

AP16 59% SC
Having secured the rights to name the game after a famous tournament, you'd have thought Elite would have tried to simulate same. It doesn't look as if they did. As a footy game it's OK, but not up to the standard set by *Sensible Soccer* and *Striker*. Quite fun in a shallow arcadey sort of way but let down by poor graphics and slow play. ★★★

EUROPEAN FOOTBALL CHAMP
Domark £24.99
AP15 64% NW
A bog standard footy game. There was little chance of recreating the fancy graphics of the coin-op, so instead Domark have concentrated on keeping what gameplay there is up to scratch. A nice try, but it won't win the cup. ★★★

EYE OF THE BEHOLDER II
SSI/US Gold £35.99

AP14 86% KF
Nothing here that wasn't in the first (classic) game, but generally done that little bit better. Think very carefully before buying both, though. ★★★★

FACE OFF
Krisalis £25.99
AP9 60% SC
Manchester United Europe on ice, but less fun. About as good as Amiga ice hockey gets at the moment, though. ★★★

FALLING JEWELS
Soft & Easy £25.99
AP10 66% GP
Very rough-looking but sneakily likeable clone of the Sega *Tetris* clone *Columns*. You could do worse (like any of the official Amiga *Tetris* games, for example). ★★★

FANTASTIC VOYAGE
Centaur £25.99
AP10 77% RP
Average shoot-'em-up distinguished by a lovely lighting effect which lends the game a charming atmosphere, albeit without adding anything to the hackneyed design. ★★★

FASCINATION
Tomahawk £29.99

AP17 67% JD
Moderately groovy French adventure with a female central character. Nice and straightforward but tends to be a bit too linear. It looks great, too, although some of the scenes might trouble the less liberal-minded. Sexy or sexist? You decide. ★★★

FATE – GATES OF DAWN
Rainbow Arts £29.99
AP8 70% JD
Finicky and tatty FRPG, only partially redeemed by the fact that it's got some moderately cute babes in it. ★★

FINAL BLOW
Storm £25.99
AP9 33% SC
Astonishingly shallow even for a boxing game, you'll spend half-an-hour completing this and the rest of your life regretting buying it in the first place. So don't. ★

FIRE AND ICE
Renegade £25.99

AP14 88% MR
Magic Pockets, but fast and good. ★★★★★

FIRETEAM 2200
Internecine £29.99
AP13 31% DG
Quite breathtakingly horrid-looking, and seriously dull to boot. Just another wargame, really. ★

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CABLE - £9.95

You will need a cable to connect the Philips 8833 to your computer. These cables are normally £14.95 each but, if you buy one from Silica at the same time as your new monitor, we will give you a £5 discount so you pay only £9.95 inc VAT. Make sure you order the correct cable for your computer.

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TOTAL!

Welcome to ish 11, folks... Oi, Jimbo, stop peering through *my* cover! Get back inside and do some work!

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November 1992
Issue 11

SUPER NES!

Zelda III!
Mario Kart,
Axelay,
Pilot Wings,

WIN a coin-op! Full details

100% FOR PLAYERS OF NINTENDO

Super NES
Game Boy
NES

A wholly independent mag from Future Publishing (ain't that the truth!)

TOTAL! Number 11 is on sale from Thursday the 15th of October. It's got 132 pages on everything Nintendo – news, reviews, maps, tips, previews – and you can rely on us to tell it how it is, warts 'n' all!

STAR WARTS!

Battletoads tear it up on NES and Game Boy!

End of level two, and you've got to beat Big Rat. Blast away at all his guns, and when you've wiped them all out his snout falls off (ouch).

FREE! ANOTHER U-U-UGE POSTER

Future PUBLISHING

FIRST SAMURAI
Ubi Soft (with Mega lo Mania) £30.99

AP8 91% SC T100 No.14
One of the most beautifully-constructed and playable arcade adventures the world's ever seen, with truly stunning sound into the bargain. This is the way it should be done, always. ★★★★★

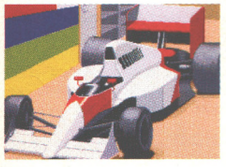
FLIGHT OF THE INTRUDER
Image Works £30.99
AP8 83% JD
Surprisingly enjoyable and zappy flight sim based on one of the US Navy's clunkier old airborne warhorses. Bags of quirky character. ★★★★

FLOOR 13
Virgin £30.99
AP14 75% MS
Tense and atmospheric sim of a covert department of the secret service. Plausible, and wonderfully gripping, if a bit expensive side for a game with no colour or moving graphics. ★★★★

FOOTBALL CHAMP
Simulmondo £25.99
AP17 53% GP
Laudable effort, realism-wise. But if you want realism, what's wrong with real life? It's not very easy to get to grips with control-wise, and not particularly entertaining when you do. Football can be, and has been, done much better. ★★

FOOTBALL DIRECTOR II
D&H £24.99
AP8 55% CC
Zzzz. ★

FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX
MicroProse £34.99



AP7 92% GP T100 No.2
Probably the most stunning technical achievement seen in Amiga games programming to date, but more importantly, a superbly and endlessly playable game to boot. Monstrously impressive in every way – buy this or we'll shoot you. ★★★★★

4D SPORTS BOXING
Mindscape £25.99
AP9 40% GP
The fourth dimension is, er, a really boring place to be. ★

4D SPORTS DRIVING
Mindscape £25.99
AP11 69% NW
A quite neat *Race Drivin'* clone, somewhat spoiled by the really clumsy and thoughtless approach to disk swapping. ★★★

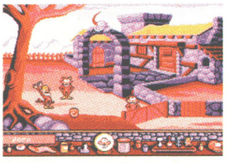
FUZZBALL
System 3 £19.99
AP9 80% MS
This *Bubble Bobble*-esque arcade platformer is almost there, but the stupid control and sky-high difficulty puts a very hefty spanner in its works. Could have been great, but isn't. ★★★

GLOBAL EFFECT
Millennium £29.99
AP13 60% JD
Sim City goes Green, but doesn't quite cut it gameplay and control interface-wise. Some very poor design logic makes it a chore. ★★

G-LOC R360
US Gold £25.99
AP18 7% LE
Possibly the most dismally programmed, boring and unimpressive piece of software we've ever seen. It's expensive, tacky, and rubbish. 'Nuff said. ★

GO
Oxford Softworks £19.99
AP12 80% SC
Unsophisticated but workable version of one of the true classics of boardgaming. 100 skill levels and a handicapping system gives everyone the chance to play this absorbing and challenging game. ★★★★

GOBLIIINS
Tomahawk £25.99
AP16 79% MR



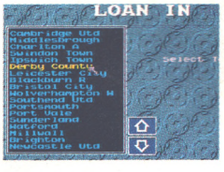
Whatever it is they give those French game designers, we'll have doubles. *Gobliiins* is a quirky, not to say utterly weird, puzzler in typical Gallic style. The characters are irredeemably stupid but you'll love them just the same. Not exactly *Another World* but better than *Pushover*. ★★★★

THE GODFATHER
US Gold £30.99
AP10 56% MS
Mario Puzo's (and Francis Coppola's) Godfather saga –just sit for a minute and try to imagine how much potential there is for a really great game in there. Then look at this godawful witless *RoboCop* clone and cry for a day and a half. ★

GOLDEN EAGLE
Loriciel £28.99
AP10 55% JD
Icky *Rolling Thunder* playalike with cute animation but no noticeable gameplay. Uninteresting, uninspired and un-French. ★

GRAEME SOUNESS VECTOR SOCCER
Impulze £25.99
AP10 32% SC
A brave effort, but while the vector graphics work pretty well, the soccer bit fails miserably. File under 'nice try, no cigar'. ★

GRAHAM TAYLOR'S SOCCER CHALLENGE
Krisalis £25.99



AP16 82% AP
Poor old Graham gets a lot of stick these days and there are many that would say he deserves it. Apparently he was involved in the development of this football manager sim and, if that's the case, his detractors will have to give him some grudging credit for a job well done. It's a game stuffed full of features, with some quite entertaining action scenes thrown in. Some niggling flaws but overall quite satisfying. ★★★★

GREAT NAPOLEONIC BATTLES
Impressions £29.99
AP10 63% RP
Duff wargame with a built-in editor so you can actually make it as much fun as you want! Allegedly. ★★

GUY SPY
ReadySoft £29.99
AP17 33% AP
Oh dear, if only looks were everything. This is another one of those cartoony adventure things that looks fabulous but isn't actually much fun to play. It's a step in the right direction, just not a very big one. ★

HAGAR THE HORRIBLE
Kingsoft £25.99
AP9 65% MS
A more expensive version of *The New Zealand Story* with Vikings in it. Surprisingly enough, though, it's less cute. ★★★

HARE RAISING HAVOC
Disney £25.99
AP12 28%SC/68% MR
It looks nice, but there's about as much gameplay in here as there is in a big empty box marked 'Gameplay-Free Zone'. It's quite funny) but you'll never play it more than once. If you've got a hard drive (and you can't play this any other way), don't waste its memory space. ★

HARLEQUIN
Gremlin £25.99

AP11 91% SC T100 No.15
One of the most complete, entertaining, addictive and imaginative games of any kind ever seen on the Amiga, *Harlequin* is a tour de force of programming and design. It's the game *Robocod* should have been. Platforms and spacehoppers have never been so much fun. ★★★★★

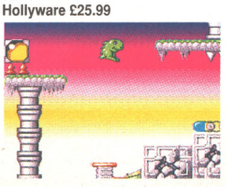
HARPOON (WITH BATTLESET II)
Electronic Arts £34.99
AP11 64% JD
Phenomenally detailed, but you'll have to be a retired Admiral to have enough time on your hands to play it properly. ★★

HEARTS OF CHINA
Sierra £34.99
AP10 84% MR
Lots better than most Sierra efforts, but still very linear, and if you haven't got one meg and a hard drive, forget it completely. ★★★★

HEIMDALL
Core Design £30.99

AP8 86% MB T100 No.46
If you're fed up of appallingly tatty RPGs, why not show some programmers this? Accessible, playable, gorgeous to look at, but still holding plenty of depth and challenge, this is the way the genre should be going. ★★★★★

HOI
Hollyware £25.99



AP17 60% GP
Hoi, you see, is a dinosaur that looks like a fish on wheels. He's the star of a jolly platform romp that's funny in parts, but too difficult to really be 'fun'. There's better stuff around if you like this sort of thing. ★★★

HOME ALONE
Accolade £24.99
AP10 48% RP
Almost as irritating as Macaulay Culkin. ★

HOOK
Ocean £25.99

AP15 84% MR
The atmosphere of Spielberg's Hook movie is nicely captured, but there isn't really all that much to it. It's small and shallow, but still jolly nicely formed.★★★★

HOSTILE BREED
Palace £25.99
AP15 82% MR
Brave, different, and mostly successful attempt to add intelligence to the shoot-'em-up. Sadly it's the shoot-'em-up bit that lets the side down. A little more attention should have been given to the arcade side of things. ★★★★

HOT RUBBER
Palace £25.99
AP14 50% GP
Completely take-it-or-leave-it motorbike racer that looks pretty sad next to *Vroom* and *Super Hang-On*. ★★

IAN BOTHAM'S CRICKET
Celebrity Software £25.99
AP16 41% AP
Even if you're a fan of cricket, you have to admit that it can sometimes be a bit boring. *Ian Botham's Cricket* is tedious no matter what you think of the real thing. Livens up a bit as a two player game but overall it's a bit of a duffer. ★★

INDY HEAT
Storm £25.99
AP11 63% SC
A very good conversion of the arcade game, but it's just too easy and it lacks the addictive life of *Super Off Road*. Excellent fun with a couple of friends round all the same, though. ★★★

INTERNATIONAL SPORTS CHALLENGE
Empire £29.99
AP16 78% MR
Being Olympics year, 1992 was bound to spawn a few sports sims. This one features swimming, diving, cycling, show jumping, skeet shooting, and a marathon. It has its fair share of joystick waggling (on the swimming and cycling) but the other events make up for it with fun gameplay and the graphics are decent enough. Not brilliant, but good enough if you have a few friends round on a rainy afternoon. ★★★

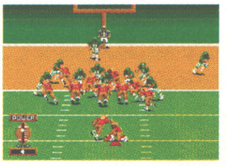
ISHAR
Silmarils £29.99
AP15 78% KF
An atmospheric experience with a good many thoughtful and original touches to set it apart from the rest of the RPG field. The only problem is that it's possible to stumble around aimlessly for a fair old time before getting into the real meat of the action. ★★★

JAGUAR XJ220
Core Design £25.99
AP15 85% JD
Sadly this game hasn't improved on *Lotus II*, with a lack of driving excitement and cars on the road being two major problems. On the other hand it does have a lap rather than course structure, excellent weather effects and a track editor. Among the better of the sprite based driving games, but *Crazy Cars III* is now the firm office favourite. ★★★

JIM POWER
Loriciel £25.99
AP15 78% MR
No ground breaker, but a smooth and silky (if slightly gaudy) platform shoot-'em-up effort – what it lacks in originality it more than makes up for in evidence of sheer effort and good design. Not at all bad.★★

JOHN BARNES EUROPEAN FOOTBALL
Krisalis £25.99
AP14 74% GP
A very similar game in play to *Manchester United Europe*, but the tiny area of pitch visible on screen cuts down the tactical scope dramatically, although it bumps the speed up significantly. Good fun, but shallow. ★★★

JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL
Electronic Arts £25.99

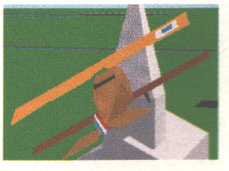


AP11 90% NW T100 No.23
Limited entertainment with a single player, but one of the most involving, absorbing and hugely playable two-player games ever. Only for fans of the sport, though. ★★★★★

KID GLOVES 2
Millennium £25.99
AP10 58% SC
Something of a wasted licence – this actually used to be called *Little Beau*, but had the *Kid* name tacked on at the last minute to no great effect. Essentially *Super Wonder Boy*, but a bit more crude. ★★★

KNIGHTMARE
Mindscape £30.99
AP9 74% MR
Something of another wasted licence, with all the potential of the TV show passed over in favour of, basically, a rewrite of Tony Crowther's earlier game *Captive*. It's all very clever, but the atmosphere just isn't really there. Very tough too. ★★★

KNIGHTS OF THE SKY
MicroProse £34.99



AP8 87% JD T100 No. 9
This is what it's really all about in the flight sim department. You can keep your *F-15s* and your *A320 Airbuses*, *Knights Of The Sky* captures the daredevil feel of the magnificent men of WW1 perfectly, with glorious dogfighting and lots of tricky missions. No collection should be without it. ★★★★★

LEANDER
Psygnosis £25.99

AP10 83% MR T100 No.56
Slick, smooth and highly professional platforming antics (and the hero wears a silly hat too) – a bit on the generic side, but no less enjoyable for that. Plenty of it too. ★★★★

LEGEND
Mindscape £30.99

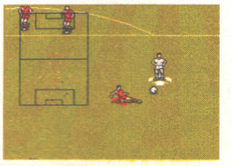
AP14 91% KF
An RPG that's got everyone in the AMIGA POWER office playing it has to be something pretty special, and that's just what this is. Well-balanced and easy to get into, we can't think of a single serious flaw. ★★★★★

LEISURE SUIT LARRY 5
Sierra £34.99
AP11 50% KF
The kind of thing that makes buying a Super NES suddenly seem like a really good idea. Inept, unfair, morally-dubious, and about as nice to look at as your average motorway pile-up. Face it, it's rubbish. ★

LINKS
US Gold £37.99

AP16 70% MS
Links is easier to play than either *MicroProse Golf* or *PGA Tour Golf*. It looks absolutely fabulous and is an almost flawless golf sim. Its major fault (and it's a MAJOR fault) is that it's so slow that a three-toed sloth on mogadon would look like a champion sprinter by comparison. ★★★

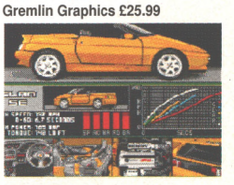
LIVERPOOL THE COMPUTER GAME
Grandslam £25.99



AP16 65% SC
It's a football game and it's based on Liverpool FC. What more do you need to know? Oh alright then. It's easy to get into, but lacks any real depth. There's not much of the pitch on the screen at any time so tactics are out. It looks OK and has a lot of good ideas but overall it doesn't really make it. ★★★

LORD OF THE RINGS
Electronic Arts £29.99
AP9 63% MR
Very atmospheric, with a friendly control interface, but the Amiga really creaks as it tries to keep it all going. Only for those who aren't in a hurry. ★★★

LOTUS III
Gremlin Graphics £25.99



AP18 74% MS
Crazy Cars 3 creams *Lotus III* for sheer speed and thrills, and the

much-vaunted course designer doesn't give you much opportunity to design. It's no disgrace but the time of *Lotus* has passed. ★★★

LURE OF THE TEMPTRESS
Revolution £30.99

AP15 88% MS
Not nearly as big as *Monkey Island 2*, but it's seven quid cheaper and has a lot fewer disks (and, for the xenophobes among you, it's British). It doesn't contain as much humour as *MI2*, but if you prefer the slightly more serious approach to adventures you'll love it . You won't be disappointed. ★★★★★

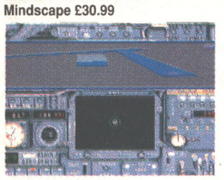
MADDOG WILLIAMS
Game Crafters £30.99
AP12 47% JD
Stupendously run-of-the-mill Sierra-game clone that's more 'average' than actual 'crap' – but why not blow your £31 on something that's actually 'good'? ★★

MAGIC GARDEN
Electronic Zoo £25.99
AP9 55% MB
Novel 'keep-the-garden-functioning-by-doing-ten-things-at-once' idea, but in action it simply doesn't grab you. You can't, indeed, see the wood for the twee.★★

THE MANAGER
US Gold £25.99
AP14 36% SC
Everything that's tedious and inept about football management games can be found in this hopeless pile of old nob. A million statistic screens and incomprehensible icons make *The Manager* knuckle-chewingly painful to play, with no redeeming features at all. Avoid desperately. ★

THE MED CONFLICT – BATTLESET 3
Electronic Arts £14.99
AP12 65% JD
Oh, please. This is such a specialist naval wargamer's thing that we seriously doubt a single one of our readers is in the slightest bit interested in it. Prove us wrong (all you Village People fans). ★★

MEGAFORTRESS
Mindscape £30.99



AP16 82% RL
Pull on that battered leather flying jacket, polish up your Ray-Ban Aviators and be the pilot of a B-52. At first glance it could be a bit of a techie nightmare, but it's surprisingly entertaining. The wide variety of tasks and enthralling atmosphere will keep you glued to the screen but the lack of ground detail loses the game a few marks. Atmospheric strategy flight-sim. ★★★★

MEGATRAVELLER 2
Empire £29.99

AP16 60% AP
A positively massive sci-fi FRPG with everything including the kitchen sink. Great scope for independent exploration and 'doing your own thing'. *Megatraveller* was deep, the sequel is even deeper – it just doesn't have any water in it. There's a great game in there somewhere, but you're the one who has to hunt it out. For fans only. ★★★

MERCENARY III
Novagen £29.99
AP10 50% KF
Disappointingly lacklustre sequel to the pretty entertaining previous two *Mercenary* games. Looks absolutely dreadful and there's not really a lot to do. ★★

MICROPROSE GOLF
MicroProse £34.99
AP8 84% SC T100 No.50
Lovely 3D golf sim with lots of frills, but the core of the gameplay isn't all it should be, and it's sort of embarrassing watching the Amiga simply throw away the bits of screen it can't cope with moving around. ★★★★

MIGHT & MAGIC III
New World Computing £35.99

AP16 87% RP
If you've always thought you might like to get into FRPGs then this is as good a place to start as any. It's got auto-mapping; effective combat; big, deep realistic gameplay; and almost everything else you could ever want. The sound and animation aren't up to much but they never are. *M&M III* is a real sweetie. ★★★★

MILLE MIGLIA
Silmulmondo £25.99
AP15 53% MB
A slow, vintage car-style driving game dressed up in authenticity and nostalgia. Great for fans of the classic car, of dubious worth for the rest of us. If you like fast driving games, forget this and go for *Crazy Cars 3*. ★★

MONKEY ISLAND 2
US Gold £37.99

AP15 90% GP
A worthy sequel – and to be a worthy sequel to the excellent *Monkey Island* takes some doing. Despite a few flaws, it's essential if you enjoyed the first game, with enough in the way of improvements and changes to keep you entertained and on your toes. ★★★★★

MOONSTONE
Mindscape £30.99
AP9 73% NW
This RPG hack-'em-up looks good, but the game doesn't flow and it's not as involved as it'd have you believe. ★★★

MYTH
System 3 £25.99
AP15 67% GP
System 3 certainly get an 'A' for effort. Myth is a well-researched and, by and large, lively project with high-spots of gloss and variety. Unfortunately it lacks real depth, and some of the puzzle logic is crazy. ★★★

NAPOLEON 1
Internecine £29.99
AP8 39% JD
Aaaaarrrrrggggghhhh! ★

NECRONOM
Linel £25.99
AP9 78% SC
Offputtingly tacky-looking at first, but worth sticking with to discover the challenging and imaginative (for a shoot-'em-up, anyway) game hidden beneath the surface. ★★★

THE NEVERENDING STORY II
Linel £25.99
AP10 42% JD
Lots of little sub-games, but nothing that really gives you any feel for the film at all. Even in a genre with some real junk around (ie the multiple-sub-games movie licence), you can find lots of better examples than this. ★

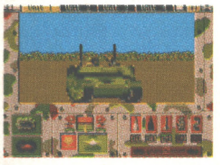
OH NO! MORE LEMMINGS
Psygnosis £25.99 (data disk version £19.99)

AP9 82% SC
A sadly missed opportunity to do something really interesting, but if you're a *Lemmings* lover who wants a new load of screens in the same vein as before, you'll be in seventh heaven. The difficulty curve is crap, though, and it's overpriced. ★★★★

OPERATION COM-BAT
Merit Software £25.99
AP16 39% RP
It's a wargame and it's not very good. Okay? ★

ORK
Psygnosis £25.99
AP12 66% NW
This isn't a more complicated and less zappy version of *The Killing Game Show* at all – not! ★★★

PACIFIC ISLANDS
Empire £29.99
AP13 87% MR T100 No.63



Brilliantly exciting and tense tank sim that improves over its predecessor *Team Yankee* by a factor of four. A little complex for the arcade junkie, but fab all the same. ★★★★★

PANZER BATTLES
Strategic Studies Group £25.99
AP12 62% JD
Quite bright and colourful, but suffers from Crap Indistinguishable Icon Disease. ★★

PAPERBOY 2
Mindscape £25.99
AP17 28% RP
If you want to be a paperboy, get a job delivering papers. ★

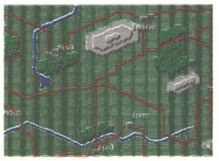
PARASOL STARS
Ocean £25.99

AP11 88% SC T100 No.18
Much more in the vein of *Bubble Bobble* than *Rainbow Islands*, this is a great all-action platformer with a particularly inspirational two-player mode. Not quite the same addictive pull as its immediate predecessor, though. ★★★★★

PGA GOLF COURSE DISK
Electronic Arts £14.99
AP11 75% RP
Some extra bits for one of the grooviest sports games ever – has to be a good thing, really. (Unless you're sick of it already.) ★★★

PEGASUS
Gremlin £25.99
AP8 69% MR
Two-style shoot-'em-up with beautiful graphics but deeply uninspiring gameplay. Alright but brain dead and lifeless. ★★★

THE PERFECT GENERAL
Ubi Soft £34.99



AP16 75% RP
Just when you thought it was safe to generalise about war games being dull, Ubi Soft manage to come up with one that's fun to play. Pitched about right for experienced players and beginners alike, we're convinced that *Perfect General* is a major contribution to something or other.★★★

PINBALL DREAMS
21st Century Entertainment £25.99

AP12 87% SC T100 No.78
'But it's only a pinball game'. Yeah, and a Ferrari F40's only a car, but what the hell's that got to do with anything? Supremely gorgeous and it'll last you a lifetime – what more could you possibly ask for? ★★★★★

PLAN NINE FROM OUTER SPACE
Gremlin Graphics £34.99
AP18 36% RL
Reasonably entertaining idea for a game, but the gameplay is disjointed, the music and sound effects are abysmal and it's too short. There are plenty of other things to blow 35 quid on. ★★

POPULOUS II
Electronic Arts £29.99
AP8 93% MB T100 No.8
Superb sequel that improves dramatically on what was, for most

people, one of the best games of all time. If that's not a good enough recommendation, we don't know what is. Our highest-ever mark for a full-price game. ★★★★★

POPULOUS WORLD EDITOR
Electronic Arts £14.99
AP10 70% GP
Don't like the graphics or the landscapes in the original *Populous*? Fiddle around with them (and the worlds, of course) with this handy, if ultimately rather limited, toolkit. ★★★

POWERMONGER: WW1 EDITION
Electronic Arts £14.99
AP12 65% JD
Gives the original game a shot of much-needed character, but beyond that it doesn't really add anything to the original. ★★

PREMIERE
Core Design £30.99

AP17 84% MR
At last, a cartoony action game that's fun to play. It's a little bit basic, gameplay-wise, and the six levels are pretty similar, but it does manage to capture something of the excitement of movie studios. If Bruce Willis were a computer game, he'd probably be *Premiere*. ★★★★

PROJECT X
Team 17 £25.99
AP13 78% SC T100 No.82
We thought this was going to be a contender for game of the year, but we were wrong. Slick and brash and arcadey, but also bugged and dramatically under-playtested. A crying shame. ★★★

PROPHECY
Mirage £25.99
AP17 29% SC
Very, very like *Super Wonder Boy* only not as good. ★

PSYBORG
Loriciel £25.99
AP14 65% GP
Hyper-fast tunnel racer that's quite good fun when you get into it, but still miles too thin for a full-price product. ★★★

PUSHOVER
Ocean £25.99
AP14 79% MR
Not-entirely-unpleasant little puzzler, but relies rather more on trial-and-error than actually stretching your mental faculties to any serious degree. The best domino-toppling game on the Amiga, though. ★★★

PUTTY
System 3 £25.99

AP18 90% MR
One of the Amiga's finest and most utterly silly moments yet. The loading can be a bit of a pain but everything else (especially the sound and Uncle Ted) is wonderful. System 3 have pulled out all the stops on this one to give you more laughs for your money than any other game around. ★★★★★

RACE DRIVIN'
Domark £25.99
AP13 72% NW
A better effort than Domark's original *Hard Drivin'* conversion, but still uncomfortably prone to wildly over-sensitive control. Still, if you liked the arcade game you'll etc. ★★★★

REALMS
Virgin £29.99
AP9 84% KF T100 No.47
It's basically a slightly more complex version of the old *Kingdoms* game, but it's beautifully done. The game can occasionally descend into dull number-juggling, though. ★★★★

RED BARON
Dynamix £34.99
AP12 19% GP
On a few thousand quid's worth of PC kit this is a reasonably exciting WW1 flight sim. On the Amiga it's one of the crappiest bits of crappy old crap there's ever been. Only for those of you who find snails thrillingly fast. ★

RISKY WOODS
Electronic Arts £25.99
AP15 82% MS
Lacking variation and depth, *Risky Woods* does compensate with plenty of frenzied, and atmospheric platform action. On a par with *Leander*, it's a good buy for fans of the genre, but by no means a must. ★★★★

ROBOCOP 3
Ocean £25.99

AP10 85% MB T100 No.71
The most surprising film licence in ages, this really brings out the feel of the film, with lots of fast-paced action depicted in impressive 3D vectors, with lovely presentation into the bargain. It doesn't quite hang together as a game, perhaps, but brave, and a definite success. ★★★★★

ROBOZONE
Image Works £25.99
AP9 39% SC
Useless three-section arcade game. The first (platform) bit's crap, the second (3D maze) bit's really crap. The last (shoot-'em-up) bit isn't worth playing the other two bits for. ★

RUBICON
21st Century Entertainment £25.99
AP13 74% RP
Bland horizontally-scrolling shoot-'em-up, too far behind the pack to be really worth buying at this price. Nice weapons, though. ★★★

RUGBY COACH
D&H £24.99
AP10 42% RP
Football management, without the interesting football bits. You don't want to buy this, you really don't. ★

RUGBY – THE WORLD CUP
Domark £25.99
AP8 86% CC T100 No.74
No-nonsense no-frills heavy-duty joystick waggle frenzy in this *Kick Off*-like rugby licence. A bit easy to beat, but great, exhausting fun against another human player all the same. ★★★★

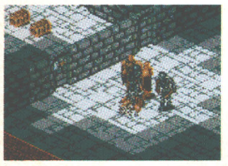
SAMURAI: THE WAY OF THE WARRIOR
Impressions £29.99
AP14 55% AP
Good presentation, but when you get into the game proper it's just one more tacky and unfriendly wargame. One for ninja fetishists. ★

SENSIBLE SOCCER
Renegade £25.99

AP15 93% SC
An unbelievably playable, fabulously realistic, and amazingly atmospheric football game. The best two player game available on the Amiga and probably one of the top two Amiga games of all time. Do yourself a favour – buy it!
★★★★★

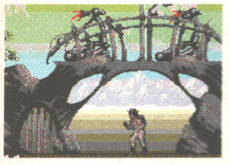
7 COLOURS
Infogrames £19.99
AP8 47% JD
Nice idea, but once again a puzzle game turns out to be more a test of chance than a genuine brainteaser. Never mind, eh? ★

SHADOWLANDS
Domark £29.99



AP11 87% MR T100 No.49
Very lovely RPG with a neat light-and-darkness effect, which (despite the fact it does have some gameplay implications) is mainly just a cosmetic gimmick on top of what's a well-designed and absorbing game. Good stuff, though occasionally a tad sluggish. ★★★★

SHADOW OF THE BEAST III
Psygnosis £29.99



AP18 71% SC
A sweet game to play but you're not getting enough for your 30 quid. More fun than the other two *Beast* games and there's no free T-shirt (that's a plus, by the way). There's not very much to it. ★★★

SHADOW SORCEROR
US Gold £27.99
AP8 71% MR
Not very accessible – and not very appealing to FRP purists either – this is an awkward, disjointed and generally unfulfilling game. Worth a try if you're after something a bit different, though *Shadowlands* does it better. ★★★

SIM ANT
Ocean £34.99
AP14 59% MB
Some of the most appaling programming seen in a professional game in years ruins what could have been an interesting concept. Even if you've got a hard drive, forget it. ★

SIMEARTH
Ocean £34.99
AP17 41% JD
As a simulation of a living planet, it's spot on. The problem is that ecosystems are, by their very nature, slow, dull things and neither the presentation nor the interface do anything to make them more interesting. ★★

SMASH TV
Ocean £25.99
AP9 81% MR
Massively disappointing conversion of one of the best coin-ops in years. Written in such a way as to cater for the American market, so why should you spend any of your hard-earned Sterling on it? ★★★

SPACE 1889
Empire £30.99
AP9 74% SC
Inferior follow-up to *MegaTraveller*, although it's not a bad RPG thing in its own right. The idea is a lot more

interesting than the execution, though. ★★★

SPACE ACE II
Empire £34.99
AP10 17% SC
Look, it's simple. Are you a total cretin? Do you want to see crap games come out on the Amiga in the future? If the answer to those questions is 'no', don't buy this game. There's nothing else to it. ★

SPACE CRUSADE
Gremlin £25.99
AP12 85% KF T100 No.60
Excellent boardgame conversion which does away with all that faffing around with bits of plastic and dice, but doesn't lose any of the features of the original. Very classy. ★★★★

SPACE GUN
Ocean £25.99
AP12 69% MR
Zappy *Operation Thunderbolt* clone, but nowhere near as good. Fun with a Trojan Light Phaser, but not much else. ★★

SPOILS OF WAR
Internecine £29.99
AP14 45% JD
Tedious rubbish. There is no truth in the rumour that wargames have to be dull to be realistic. We've said it often enough by now, but just to reiterate – something being a wargame isn't an excuse for it being programmed to sub-1986 standards. ★

STARUSH
Ubi Soft £25.99
AP14 64% SC
Lots of nice touches in this zodiac-inspired blaster, but unfortunately they're not attached to a decent game. Not a rip-off, but not really worth buying either. ★★★

STEEL EMPIRE
Millennium £29.99
AP11 63% RP
There aren't many wargames set in the near future, but this is, er, one of them. It didn't set our hearts on fire, but being objective this is quite good. Only quite good, mind you... ★★★

STEVE McQUEEN WESTPHASER
Loriciel £25.99
AP10 25% SC
A funny cartoon version of *Operation Wolf* set in the Wild West is undoubtedly a good idea, but it would be an even better idea to make it playable. It might also have been quite amusing to have put Steve McQueen in it at some point. ★

STORM MASTER
Silmarils £25.99

AP11 86% MS T100 No.72
Another *Kingdoms* game, but there's lots more to do in this one than *Realms*, and there's more variation to the gameplay too. ★★★★

STRIKER
Rage £25.99
AP15 76% SC
Fast moving and immediately playable, but it's just a bit too sophisticated for its own good, proving very frustrating unless you select one of the top sides. It's a good game but at the end of the day *Striker* lacks the necessary polish to make it stand up to the sheer class of the all-conquering *Sensible Soccer*. ★★★

STRIP POKER DELUXE II
CDS £25.99
AP8 7% CC
The only thing in its favour is that it plays a better game of cards than *Cover Girl Poker*. But that doesn't say much for it and it's still complete and utter rubbish. ★

STRIKE FLEET
Electronic Arts £29.99
AP9 64% CC
Lots of extremely interesting guns and stuff to use, and a huge manual to plough through. But it's a surprisingly shallow game when you look closely at it. Not much cop, really. ★★

SUPER SPACE INVADERS
Domark £25.99
AP8 51% RP
A groovy arcade game becomes a total disaster of slowness and programming incompetence on the Amiga. More like the 1977 original than the sexy *Super Space Invaders* coin-op, this is junk. ★

SUPER TETRIS
MicroProse £29.99
AP17 54% SC
Tetris with knobs on. But why? It's no better than *Super Twintris* and you can get that for nothing. ★★

SWORD OF HONOUR
DMI £25.99
AP18 28% LE
You spend longer waiting for the screens to load than you do playing them. Nothing original here, just a poor man's copy of *The Last Ninja*. Very slow and boring. ★

TENNIS CUP 2
Loriciel £25.99

AP17 72% MS
The control system is difficult to get to grips with at first, but, once mastered, it makes this one of the better tennis sims. Good looking with lots of options. All this and Inspector Clouseau announcing the scores, what more could you want? ★★★★

THUNDER BURNER
Loriciel £19.99
AP10 30% RP
Utterly nightmarish kind of *Buck Rogers* meets *Space-Harrier*-thing. A drab shoot-'em-up without the nifty flying-around-bits from *Space Harrier*. Fun VCR feature but this is the kind of thing that gives French programmers a bad name. ★

THUNDERJAWS
Domark £25.99
AP8 17% SC
Then again, the British don't come out too well either if you look at this sort of thing. Average *Rolling Thunder*-type coin-op, dreadful conversion, and that really is all you need to know. ★

TILT
Genias £25.99
AP10 50% JD
Similar in many ways to *Boston Bomb Club*, but a whole lot less lovable, this is a simplistic and repetitive puzzler that doesn't have the staying power to last you more than a few games. ★★

TIP OFF
Anco £25.99
AP10 75% GP
Pretty iffy attempt at transferring the success of *Kick Off* to a basketball game, spoiled by dodgy control and the fact that basketball simply doesn't work the same way as football does (not that *Kick Off* played much like football anyway). ★★

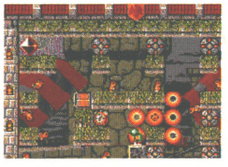
TITUS THE FOX
Titus £25.99

AP12 88% SC/MR T100 No.22
Hudson Hawk meets *The Blues Brothers*. Huge, wonderful platformer, dragged down a bit by huge amounts of disk accessing, but no less unmissable for all that. The cutest game hero in the known universe, too (nobody's based a game on Winona Ryder yet). ★★★★★

TOP BANANA
Hex £25.99
AP11 45% JD
Bizarre environmentally-friendly (both in concept and execution) *Rainbow Islands* clone, this is certainly one of the oddest games we've seen in a while. Unfortunately, while it's almost exactly the same game as *Rainbow Islands*, it's only about a tenth as good. ★★★

TOUCHDOWN
Strike Force £14.99
AP15 48% NW
Slick presentation keeps up the pace of a technically sound, if not particularly enthralling, coaching sim. All the basic features you'd expect, but gridiron fans deserve more action and a little more to excite the imagination. ★★

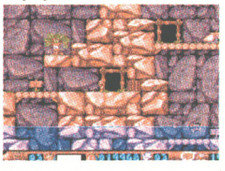
TRODDLERS
Storm £25.99



AP18 89% AP
The best elements of some of the best styles of gameplay in history combined in one cute package, and it works. Two styles combine to make a classic game in its own right. It's better than *Lemmings*, allegedly. ★★★★★

TV SPORTS: BASEBALL
Mindscape £25.99
AP15 52% NW
Well put together, but very tedious after an hour or so. If you do want baseball on your Amiga then try the much better *RBI Two Baseball* instead. ★★

UGH!
Play Byte £25.99



AP15 79% MR
A laugh and a half, *Ugh!* offers you excellent one or two player prehistoric fun, for a while at least. Not the sort of thing you'd be playing a year later, though, but worth a look. ★★★★

ULTIMA VI
Mindscape £30.99
AP13 90% MR T100 No.17

Not the kind of thing for RPG virgins to start on, or for anyone without a hard drive even to consider, but this is currently pretty much the state of the art for Amiga role-playing. Enough to keep you going for months. ★★★★★

UNDER PRESSURE
Electronic Zoo £25.99
AP8 12% SC
An *Alien Storm*-esque shoot-'em-up which looks incredibly like a Psygnosis game and plays incredibly like a complete load of old tosh. Probably the least involved game we've ever reviewed. ★

UTOPIA: THE NEW WORLDS
Gremlin £14.99
AP14 60% SC
Er, some new worlds for *Utopia*. They're okay, really. Is it just us or is £15 a lot of money for a data disk? ★★★

VENGEANCE OF EXCALIBUR
Virgin £30.99
AP13 60% MS
Not 500+ compatible, which is outrageous. Otherwise, an attractive, but pretty average RPG romp which doesn't significantly improve on its unimpressive predecessor. ★★

VIDEOKID
Gremlin £25.99
AP11 70% SC
Mega Twins without the platforms. Okay, it's not all that similar – it just looks that way initially. This is a pretty, constantly scrolling shoot-'em-up, and quite good fun really. ★★★

VIKINGS
Krisalis £25.99

AP16 81% MR
A strategy wargame thing that doesn't look ugly or contain too many statistics. It also has an easy to use interface. It's a bit like *Defender Of The Crown* without the action sequences but with some kind of magical addictive ingredient thrown in instead. And you can compete against your friends. ★★★★

VOLFIED
Empire £25.99
AP8 80% MB T100 No.90
Arcade classic *Qix* revisited. A near-perfect clone of the coin-op, but it's not as much fun as the 1980 original. Still, enjoyable to play, even if it's not the toughest game ever. ★★★★

VROOM
Ubi Soft £25.99
AP12 88% SC T100 No.35
The missing link between *F1GP* and *Lotus 2*, *Vroom* straddles two genres without falling between two stools. Great as a simple foot-down arcade game, but excellent fun as a serious tactical Formula One sim too. It's lovely and fast and you shouldn't be without.it. ★★★★★

WINTER SUPERSPORTS 92
Flair £25.99
AP15 61% GP
A high price to pay for what boils down to four different events. None of them are particularly involving or compelling, but there's fun to be had when more than one player is involved. ★★★

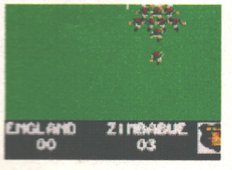
WIZKID
Ocean £25.99

AP15 91% MR
A refreshing game that mixes psychedelic arcade adventure, football, and bad jokes with arcade games like *Breakout* and *Pengo*. With its perfect control system it's as much fun to play as it obviously was to write. The best game ever (beginning with the letter W at least) If you don't buy *Wizkid*, your life really will be a lot poorer. ★★★★★

WOLFCHILD
Core Design £25.99
AP10 58% SC
Hugely disappointing platformer that's the sequel to *Switchblade* in all but name. Too short, too easy, too repetitive, and lacking the character and inspiration that separates a good game from the run-of-the-mill. ★★★

WORLD CLASS RUGBY
Audiogenic £25.99
AP9 63% MS
Poor attempt to do for rugby what *John Madden Football* did for the American gridiron game.Good graphics but dreadful control system. Over-technical, and a pain to get to grips with. ★★★

WORLD CLASS RUGBY – THE FIVE NATIONS
Audiogenic £25.99



AP14 86% MS
Dramatically-improved version of the earlier game, right up there with *Rugby – The World Cup* for playability and action. The 3D second-person perspective view (a la *John Maddon Football*) is neat, too. ★★★★

WWF WRESTLEMANIA
Ocean £25.99
AP10 39% GP
There's a limited amount of gameplay scope in any wrestling game, but even so there's a lot more to be got out of the *WWF* than is achieved by this lame and cynical cash-in. Strictly for educationally underprivileged 8-year-olds, we think you'll find. ★

ZOOL
Gremlin Graphics £25.99

AP18 90% LE
Rightly heralded as a *Sonic* beater. It's fast, tough and kicks the ass of certain other games featuring certain other characters. This is the yardstick by which other games will be measured. ★★★★★

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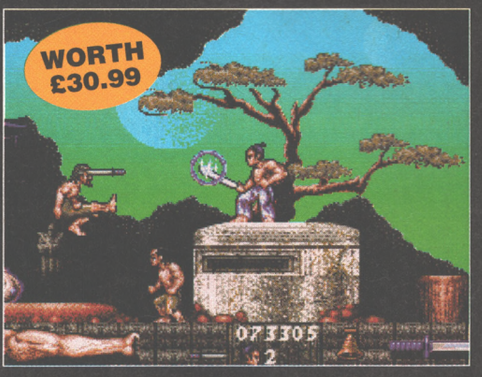
2. 'One of the Amiga's most original and finest moments yet. Flexible and versatile, that's *Putty*.'

ASSASSIN
AP RATED 89%

Probably the most playable game of its genre. Take on mad pit bull terriers, evil hippies, rampaging robots and maniac chimps in this seriously excellent console-esque game. With five enormous levels, endless bonuses and collectables and a nasty dude called Midan, you've got your work cut out.



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BACK ISSUES

1 May 1991 Our first issue! *Eye Of The Beholder, Gods* and *Cybercon III* and the first part of the *Rainbow Islands* player's guide.
On the disk: *Bombuzal* – the complete game!*

2 June 1991 And it just gets better! A giant Bullfrog interview and reviews of games like *Megatraveller* and – yes! – *Monkey Island*!
On the disk: *Kid Gloves* – the complete game!

3 July 1991 You want Core Design, CDTV, *F-15 Strike Eagle II, Deuteros*, and *Toki*? – this is the place to come!
On the disk: *Exile* special world, *Prehistorik* preview, and great PD!*

4 August 1991 The Ultimate Autumn Preview, film games, *Jimmy White's Snooker* reviewed and more!
On the disk: *Beast Busters, The Executioner* plus three excellent PD games!*

5 September 1991 All the new god sims compared. *Lemmings* preview. *Mega lo Mania* reviewed.
On the disk: *Barbarian II* demo, plus five (five!) great PD games!*

6 October 1991 *Midwinter II, Cruise For A Corpse, Magic Pockets Rodland* and many more reviewed.
On the disk: *Rolling Ronny, Captain Planet, Bullfrogger* and still more!*

7 November 1991 *Monkey Island II, Indy Jones* previews. *Formula One Grand Prix, Blues Brothers, Lotus II, Robocod* and more reviewed.
On the disk: *Leander, Video Kid*, plus PD games!*

8 December 1991 Bumper Xmas hardware guide. *Populous II, First Samurai, MicroProse Golf, Knights Of The Sky.*
On the disk: *Cisco Heat, Elvira Arcade* (one meg), best of PD!*

9 January 1992 Giant FRPG feature, our Games Of The Year. Reviews of *Smash TV, Birds Of Prey* and more!
Double disk: *Knights Of The Sky* training section (one meg) & *Puggles.*

10 February 1992 Spring Game Guide. Reviews of *RoboCop 3, Another World, Leander* and more!
On the disk: PD Special – featuring *Mr Wobbly Leg, Raid* and *Squamble.*

11 March 1992 *Mega lo Mania II* – diary of a game. Platform games buyers guide. Reviews of *Harlequin, John Madden, Shadowlands.*
On the disk: *Pacific Islands* mission and three PD games!

12 April 1992 Giant Psygnosis preview feature, beat-'em-up guide. Reviewed: *Parasol Stars, Titus The Fox, Vroom .*
Double disk: *Titus The Fox, Project X*, plus *Rome* (one meg only).

13 May 1992 Anniversary Issue! New AP Top 100, hidden games guide. Reviewed: *Apidya, Project X.*
Double disk: Demos of *Sensible Soccer, Wizkid, Campaign, Pinball Dreams.*

14 June 1992 Footy games preview, joystick guide. Reviewed: *Fire & Ice, Addams, Eye Of The Beholder II, Pushover.*
Double disk: Playable levels of *Legend* and *Aqua Ventura.*

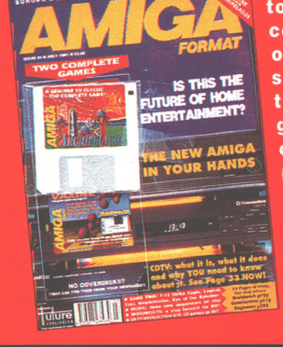
15 July 1992 Reviews! *Wizkid, Sensible Soccer, Monkey Island 2, Lure of the Temptress* and (of course) much more.
Double disk: *Galactic, Amega Race, Number Fumbler*, Mental Image shareware.

16 August 1992 Shoot 'em up guide. Reviewed: *Crazy Cars III, Links, Dojo Dan, Civilization, Might & Magic III.*
Double Disk: *D/Generation, Level Two, Troddlers* and *Locomotion.*

17 September 1992 Pop stars and their games. Guide to multi-player games.
Reviewed: *Premiere, Bug Bomber, Fascination.*
Double Disk: *Top Secret, Beast Master, Captain Dynamo.*

18 October 1992 The Ultimate Autumn Preview.
Where are they now?
Reviewed: *Zool, Putty, Lotus III, Troddlers*, and *Beast III*
On the disk: *Lotus III* and *Tearaway Thomas.*

AMIGA FORMAT BACK ISSUE



Another chance to get your own copy of issue 24 of our very own sister mag. With two complete games on its cover disks (*Archipelagos* and *Vaxine*), it's got to be worth five quid of anyone's money.

* *Please note: disks 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 are NOT A500 Plus compatible.*

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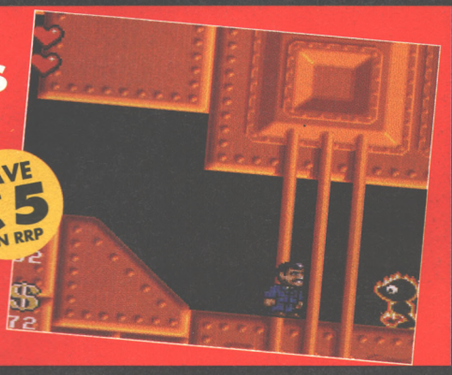

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The most fun five people can have with a computer (and pretty good on your own too). This game is responsible for more lost time in the AP office than almost any other.

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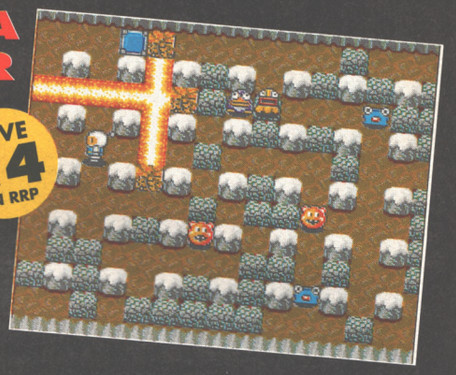

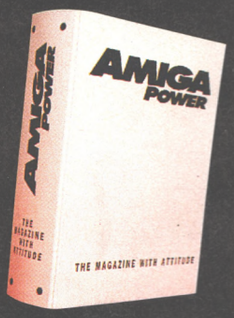

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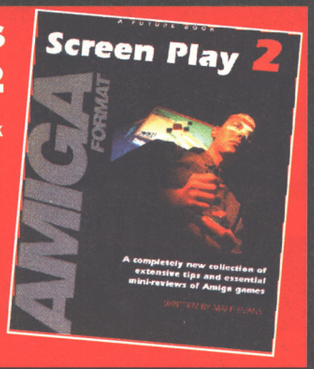

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SENSIBLE SOCCER IN THE STYLE OF BULLDOG BLIGHTY

BY STU CAMBRIDGE AND JON HARE

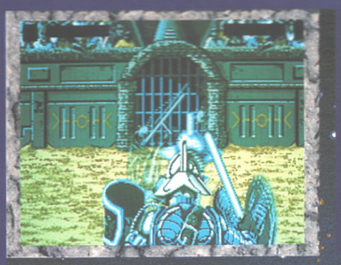
IN THE **style** OF...

Andy Warhol has a chat with Roger Dean, and decides to try his hand at macho fantasy pictures. Leonardo Da Vinci meets Rolf Harris down the pub and decides to do the Mona Lisa in crayons. System 3's *Putty* gets re-interpreted as a splatter movie. All of these things are possible in the twilight zone of In The Style Of. This month sees the return of those ever-so Sensible boys, shamelessly plugging their next game, *Cannon Fodder*. The rogues.

Jon: "The screen here shows *Sensible Soccer* entering the warzone, in the style of our next game *Cannon Fodder*. As you can see it's England vs Germany, with the score at 2-0 – not very politically sound, but good harmless fun.

"We just had to do it really, because it's one of those football jokes which people crack all the time. We just thought, 'what the hell', you know?

"It's a bit xenophobic, but my mother is actually German, so it's not done with any kind of malice."



Part 2 of the B.A.T. saga takes place in Roma 2, the capital city of Shedishan, a planet in the B8 system. This time you are Jehan Menasis, an agent of the famous Bureau of Astral Troubleshooters. Your mission: crush the unscrupulous KOSHAN which holds an almost complete monopoly of the precious Echiatone 21.
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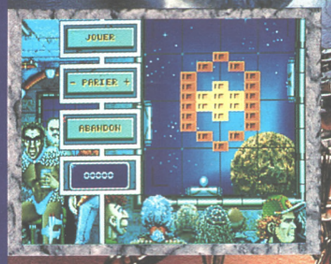

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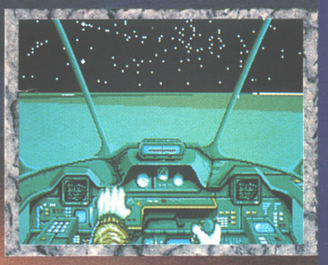

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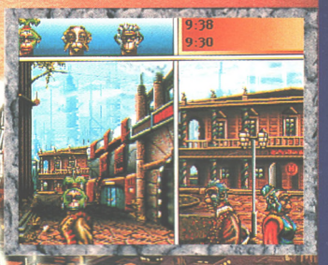

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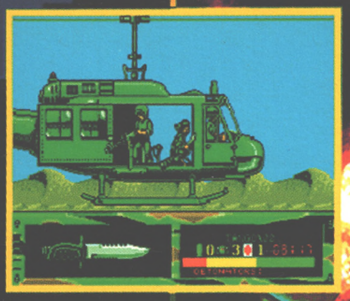

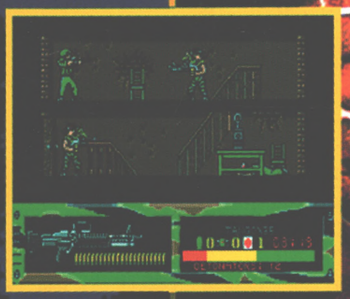

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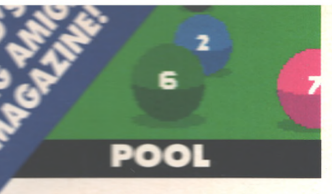

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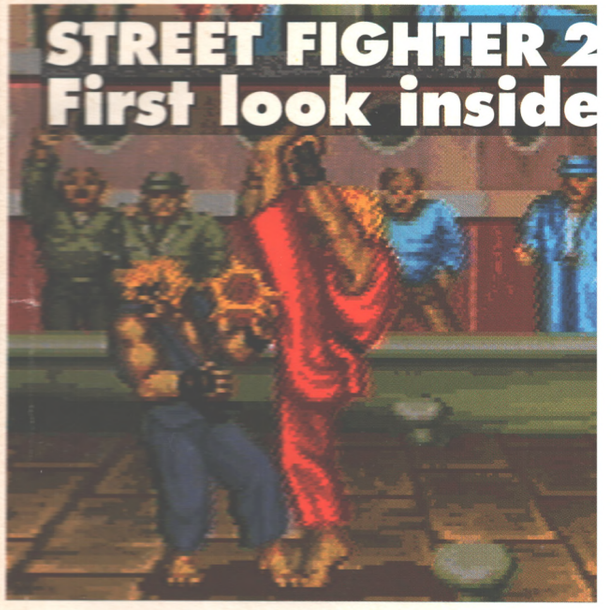

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